

THE Exploits of Elaine

A Detective Novel and a Motion Picture Drama
Presented by The Omaha Bee in Collaboration with the Famous Pathe
Players and the Eclectic Film Co.
Introducing Miss Pearl White,
Arnold Daly and "Craig Kennedy"
The Famous Scientific Detective of Fiction.

Written by Arthur B. Reeve

The Well-Known Novelist and the Creator of the "Craig Kennedy" Stories
Dramatized into a Photo-Play by Charles Goddard
Author of "The Perils of Pauline"

Cast of Leading Characters in the Motion Picture Reproduction by the Famous Pathe Players

ELAINE DODGE Miss Pearl White
CRAIG KENNEDY Mr. Arnold Daly
HARRY BENNETT Mr. Sheldon Lewis

Everything you read here today you can see in the fascinating Pathe Motion Pictures at the Motion Picture Theaters this week. Next Sunday another chapter of "The Exploits of Elaine" and new Pathe reels.

Synopsis of Previous Chapter.

The New York police are mystified by a series of murders of prominent men. The principal clue to the murderer is the warning letter which is sent the victims, signed with a "clutching hand." The latest victim of the mysterious assassin is Taylor Dodge, the insurance president. His daughter, Elaine, employs Craig Kennedy, the famous scientific detective, to try to unravel the mystery. What Kennedy accomplished is told by his friend Jameson, a newspaper man. The criminals make many bold attempts to discourage Kennedy and Elaine from following their trail, but all their ingenious and crafty schemes are checked by the wonderful detective ability and scientific knowledge of Craig Kennedy. The notorious women of the underworld are utilized by the master criminal, and they employ their feminine blandishments and wiles to destroy Elaine and Kennedy. One of them poses as the secret wife of Taylor Dodge, and through this ruse entices Elaine into a search for proof of the alleged marriage, finally maneuvering her into a dangerous trap. The other adventures leads Kennedy into a similar trap, but his distrust of the woman prompts him to take peculiar precautions, which finally enable him to save Elaine and himself from destruction.

The Hidden Voice.

CHAPTER VIII.

JAMESON, wake up!"

I leaped out of bed, still in my pajamas, and stood for a moment staring about. Then I ran into the living room. I looked about, rubbing my eyes, startled. No one was there.

"Hoy—Jameson—wake up!"

It was spooky.

I ran back into Craig's room. He was gone. There was no one in any of our rooms. The surprise had now thoroughly awakened me.

"Where—the deuce—are you?" I demanded.

Suddenly I heard the voice again—no doubt about it, either.

"Here I am—over on the couch!"

I scratched my head, puzzled. There was certainly no one on that couch.

A laugh greeted me. Plainly, though, it came from the couch. I went over to it, and, ridiculous as it seemed, began to throw aside the pillows.

There lay nothing but a little oblong oaken box, perhaps eight or ten inches long and three or four inches square at the ends. In the face were two peculiar square holes, and from the top projected a black disc, about the size of a watch, fastened on a swinging metal arm. In the face of the disc were several perforations.

I picked up the strange looking thing in wonder, and from that magic box actually came a burst of laughter.

"Come over to the laboratory, right away," pealed forth a merry voice. "I've something to show you."

"Well," I gasped, "what do you know about that?"

Very early that morning Craig had got up, leaving me snoring. Cases never wearied him. He thrived on excitement.

He had gone over to the laboratory and set to work in a corner over another of those peculiar boxes, exactly like that which he had already left in our rooms.

In the face of each of these boxes, as I have said, were two square holes. The sides of these holes converged inward into the box in the manner of a four-sided pyramid, ending at the apex in a little circle of black, perhaps half an inch across.

Half an hour afterward I walked into the laboratory, feeling a little sheepish over the practical joke, but none the less curious to find out all about it.

"What is it?" I asked, indicating the apparatus. "A vocophone," he replied, still laughing, "the loud speaking telephone, the little box that hears and talks. It talks right out in meeting, too—no transmitter to hold to the mouth, no receiver to hold to the ear. You see, this transmitter is so sensitive that it picks up even a whisper, and the receiver is placed back of those two megaphone-like pyramids."

"I believe the Clutching Hand has been shadowing the Dodge house," he continued thoughtfully. "As long as we watch the place, too, he will do nothing. But if we should seem ostentatiously, not to be watching, perhaps he may try something, and we may be able to get a clue to his identity over this vocophone. See?"

I nodded. "We've got to run him down somehow," I agreed.

"Yes," he said, taking his coat and hat. "I am going to connect up one of these things in Miss Dodge's library and arrange with the telephone company for a clear wire, so that we can listen here, where that fellow will never suspect."

At about the same time that Craig and I sallied forth on this new mission, Elaine was arranging some flowers on a stand near the corner of the Dodge library where the secret panel was in which her father had hidden the papers for the possession of which the Clutching Hand had murdered him. They did not disclose his identity, we knew, but they did give directions to at least one of his hang-outs and were therefore very important.

She had moved away from the table, but, as she did so, her dress caught in something in the woodwork. She tried to loosen it and in so doing touched the little metallic spring on which her dress had caught.

Instantly, to her utter surprise, the panel

moved. It slid open, disclosing a strong box. Inside were some papers, sealed in an envelope and marked "Limp Red Correspondence." The fatal documents seemed almost uncanny. Their very presence frightened her. What should she do?

She seized the telephone and eagerly called Kennedy's number.

"Hello," answered a voice.

"Is that you, Craig?" she asked excitedly.

"No, this is Mr. Jameson."

"Oh, Mr. Jameson, I've discovered the Clutching Hand papers," she began, more and more excited.

"Have you read them?" came back the voice quickly.

"No; shall I?"

"Then don't unseal them," cautioned the voice.

"Put them back exactly as you found them and I'll tell Mr. Kennedy the moment I can get hold of him."

"All right," nodded Elaine. "I'll do that. And please get him as soon as you possibly can."

"I will."

"I'm going out shopping now," she returned, suddenly. "But, tell him I'll be back right away."

"Very well."

Hanging up the receiver, Elaine dutifully replaced the papers in the box and returned the box to its secret hiding place, pressing the spring and sliding the panel shut.

A few minutes later she left the house in the Dodge car.

Outside our laboratory, leaning against a railing, Dan the Dude, an emissary of the Clutching Hand, whose dress now greatly belied his underworld "monniker," had been shadowing us, watching to see when we left. The moment we disappeared, he raised his hand carefully above his head and made the sign of the Clutching Hand. Far down the street, in a closed car, the Clutching Hand himself, his face masked, gave an answering sign.

A moment later he left the car, gazing about stealthily. Not a soul was in sight and he managed to make his way to the door of our laboratory without being observed. Then he opened it with a pass key which he must have obtained in some way by working the janitor of the university officials.

Probably he thought that the papers might be at the laboratory, for he had repeatedly failed to locate them at the Dodge house. At any rate he was busily engaged in ransacking drawers and cabinets in the laboratory, when the telephone suddenly rang. He did not want to answer it, but if it kept on ringing some one outside might come in. An instant he hesitated. Then, disguising his voice as much as he could to imitate mine, he took off the receiver.

"Hello!" he answered.

"Have you read them?" he asked, curbing his impatience as she unsuspectingly poured forth her story, supposedly to me.

"Then don't unseal them," he hastened to reply.

"Put them back. Then there can be no question about them. You can open them before witnesses."

Clutching Hand lost no further time at the laboratory. He had this, luckily for him, found out what he wanted. The papers were not there after all, but at the Dodge house.

Suppose she should really be gone on only a short shopping trip and should return to find that she had been fooled over the wire? Quickly he went to the telephone again.

"Hello, Dan," he called when he got his number. "Miss Dodge is going shopping. I want you and the other falsers to follow her—delay her all you can. Use your own judgment."

It was what had come to be known in his organization as the "Brotherhood of Falsers." There, in the back room of a low dive, were Dan the Dude, the emissary who had been loitering about the laboratory, a gunman, Dago Mike, a couple of women, slatterns, one known as Kitty the Hawk, and a boy of eight or ten, whom they called Billy. Before them stood large schooners of beer while the precocious youngsters grumbled over milk.

"All right, Chief," shouted back Dan, their leader, as he hung up the telephone after noting carefully the hasty instructions. "We'll do it—trust us."

Elaine had not been gone long from the house when Craig and I arrived there. She had followed the telephone instructions of the Clutching Hand and had told no one.

"Too bad," greeted Jennings, "but Miss Elaine has just gone shopping and I don't know when she'll be back."

Shopping being an uncertain element as far as time was concerned, Kennedy asked if any one else was at home.

"Mrs. Dodge is in the library reading, sir," replied Jennings, taking it for granted that we would see her.

Aunt Josephine greeted us cordially, and Craig set down the vocophone package he was carrying. She nodded to Jennings to leave us, and he withdrew.

"I'm not going to let anything happen here to Miss Elaine again if I can help it," remarked Craig in a low tone, a moment later, gazing about the library.

"What are you thinking of doing?" asked Aunt Josephine keenly.

"I'm going to put in a vocophone," he returned, unwrapping it.

"What's that?" she asked.

"A loud speaking telephone—connected with my laboratory," he explained, repeating what he had already told me, while she listened almost awestruck at the latest scientific wonder.

We was looking about, trying to figure out just where it could be placed to best advantage, when he approached the suit of armor.

"I see you have brought it back and had it repaired," he remarked to Aunt Josephine. Suddenly his face lighted up. "Ah—an idea!" he exclaimed. "No one will ever think to look inside that."

"Now, Mrs. Dodge," he said finally, as he had completed installing the thing and hiding the wire under carpets and rugs until it ran out to the connection which he made with the telephone, "don't breathe a word of it—to any one. We don't know whom to trust or suspect."

"I shall not," she answered, by this time thoroughly educated in the value of silence.

Kennedy looked at his watch.

"I've got an engagement with the telephone company now," he said rather briskly, although I knew that if Elaine had been there the company and everything could have gone hang for the present. "Sorry not to have seen Miss Elaine," he added, as we bowed ourselves out, "but I think we've got her protected now."

"I hope so," sighed her aunt.

Elaine's car had stopped finally at a shop on Fifth avenue. She stepped out and entered, leaving her chauffeur to wait.

As she did so, Dan and Billy sidled along the crowded sidewalk.

Dan the Dude left Billy and Billy surreptitiously drew from under his coat a dirty half loaf of bread. With a glance about, he dropped it into the gutter close to the entrance to Elaine's car. Then he withdrew a little distance.

When Elaine came out and approached her car, Billy, looking as cold and forlorn as could be, shot forward. Pretending to spy the dirty piece of bread in the gutter, he made a dive for it, just as Elaine was about to step into the car.

Elaine, surprised, drew back. Billy picked up the piece of bread, and with all the actions of having discovered a treasure began to knead it at voraciously.

Shocked at the disgusting sight, she tried to take the bread away from him.

"I know it's dirty, miss," whimpered Billy, "but it's the first food I've seen for four days."

Instantly Elaine was full of sympathy. She had taken the food away. That would not suffice.

"What's your name, little boy?" she asked.

"Billy," he replied, blubbering.

"Where do you live?"

"With me mother and father—they're sick—nothing to eat."

He was whimpering an address far over on the East Side.

"Get into the car," Elaine directed.

"Gee—but this is swell," he cried, with no fake, this time.

On they went, through the tenement canyons, dodging children and pushcarts, stopping first at a grocer's, then at a butcher's and a delicatessen. Finally the car stopped where Billy directed. Billy hopped out, followed by Elaine and her chauffeur, his arms piled high with provisions. She was indeed a lovely Lady Bountiful as a crowd of kids quickly surrounded the car.

In the meantime Dago Mike and Kitty the Hawk had gone to a wretched flat, before which Billy stopped. Kitty sat on the bed, putting dark circles under her eyes with a blackened cork. She was very thin and emaciated, but it was dissipation that had done it. Dago Mike was correspondingly poorly dressed.

He had paused beside the window to look out. "She's coming," he announced finally.

Kitty hastily jumped into the rickety bed, while Mike took up a crutch that was standing idle in a corner. She coughed resignedly and he limped about, forlorn. They had, assumed their parts, which were almost to the burlesque of poverty, when the door was pushed open and Billy burst in, followed by Elaine and the chauffeur.

"Oh, ma—oh, pa," he cried, running forward and kissing his parents, as Elaine, overcome with sympathy, directed the chauffeur to lay the things on a shabby table.

"God bless you, lady, for a benevolent angel," muttered the pair, to which Elaine responded by moving over to the wretched bed and bending down to stroke the forehead of the sick woman.

Billy and Mike exchanged a sly wink.

Just then the door opened again. All were genuinely surprised this time, for a prim, spick and span, middle-aged woman entered.

"I am Miss Statistix, of the organized charities," she announced, looking around sharply. "I saw your car standing outside, miss, and the children below told me you were up here. I came up to see whether you were aiding really deserving poor."

Miss Statistix took a step forward, looking in a very superior manner from Elaine to the packages of food and then at these prize members of the Brotherhood. She snorted contemptuously.

"Why—wh—what's the matter?" asked Elaine, fidgeting uncomfortably, as if she were herself guilty, in the icy atmosphere that now seemed to envelop all things.

"This man is a gunman, that woman is a bad woman, the boy is Billy the Bread Snatcher," she answered precisely, drawing out a card on which to record something, "and you, miss, are a fool!"

Kitty and Mike, accompanied by Billy, sneaked out. Elaine, now very much embarrassed, looked about, wondering at the rapid-fire change. Miss Statistix smiled pityingly.

"Such innocence!" she murmured, sadly shaking her head as she led Elaine to the door. "Don't you know better than to try to help anybody without investigating?"

Elaine departed, speechless, properly squelched, followed by her chauffeur.

Meanwhile, a closed car, such as had stood across the laboratory, had drawn up not far from the Dodge house. Near it was a man in rather shabby clothes and a visored cap on which were the words in dull gold lettering, "Metropolitan Window

Cleaning Company." He carried a bucket and a small extension ladder.

A few moments later, Dan appeared at the servants' entrance of the Dodge house and rang the bell. Jennings, who happened to be down there, came to the door.

"Man to clean the windows," saluted the bogus cleaner, touching his hat in a way quietly to call attention to the words on it and drawing from his pocket a faked written order.

"All right," nodded Jennings, examining the order and finding it apparently all right.

Dan followed him in, taking the ladder and bucket upstairs, where Aunt Josephine was still reading.

"The man to clean the windows, ma'am," apologized Jennings.

"Oh, very well," she nodded, taking up her book to go. Then, recalling the frequent injunctions of Kennedy, she paused long enough to speak quietly to Jennings.

"Stay here and watch him," she whispered as she went out.

Jennings nodded, while Dan opened a window and set to work.

Elaine had started again in her car down the crowded narrow street. From her position she could not possibly have seen Johnnie, another of the Brotherhood, watching her eagerly up the street.

But as her car approached, Johnnie, with great determination, pulled himself together and ran forward across the street. She saw that.

"Oh!" she screamed, her heart almost stopping. He had fallen directly in front of the wheels of the car, apparently, and although the chauffeur stopped with a jolt, it seemed that the boy had been run over.

They jumped out. There he was, sure enough, under the very wheels. People came running now in all directions and lifted him up, groaning piteously. He seemed literally twisted into a knot, which looked as if every bone in his body was broken or dislocated.

Elaine was overcome. For, following their natural instincts, the crowd began pushing in with cries of "Lynch the driver!" It would have gone hard with him, too, if she had interfered.

"Here!" cried Elaine, stepping in. "It wasn't his fault. The boy ran across the street, right in front of the car. Now—we're just going to rush this boy to the hospital—right away!"

A few minutes later they pulled up before the ambulance entrance to the hospital.

In the reception room were a couple of nurses and a young medical student when Johnnie was carried in and laid on the bed.

At that moment the door opened, and an elderly, gray-bearded house physician entered. The others stepped back from the bed respectfully.

He advanced and examined Johnnie.

The doctor looked at the boy a moment, then at Elaine.

"I will now effect a miraculous cure by the laying on of hands," he announced, adding quickly, "and of feet!"

To the utter surprise of all, he seized the boy by the coat collar, lifting him up and actually bouncing him on the floor. Then he picked him up, shook him and ran him out of the room, delivering one last kick as he went, it was quite evident that he was no more injured than the chauffeur. Elaine did not know whether to be angry or to laugh, but finally joined in the general laugh.

"That was Double-Jointed Johnnie," puffed the doctor, as he returned to them, "one of the greatest accident fakers in the city."

"Elaine, having had two unfortunate experiences during the day, now decided to go home, and the doctor politely escorted her to her car.

From his closed car, the Clutching Hand gazed intently at the Dodge house. He could see Dan on the ladder, now washing the library window, his back toward him.

Dan turned slowly and made the sign of the hand. Turning to his chauffeur, the master criminal spoke a few words in a low tone and the driver hurried off.

A few minutes later the driver might have been seen entering a nearby drug store and going into the telephone booth. Without a moment's hesitation he called up the Dodge house and Marie. Elaine's maid, answered.

"Is Jennings there?" he asked. "Tell him a friend wants to speak to him."

"A friend of yours wants to speak to you over the telephone, Jennings," said Marie, as she came into the library.

The butler responded slowly, with a covert glance at Dan.

No sooner had they gone, however, than Dan climbed all the way into the room, ran to the door and looked after them. Then he ran to the window. Across and down the street the Clutching Hand was gazing at the house. He had seen Dan disappear and suspected that the time had come.

As the master criminal came in by the ladder through the open window Dan was on guard listening down the hallway. A signal from Dan, the Clutching Hand slid back of the portieres. Jennings was returning.

"I've finished these windows," announced Dan as the butler reappeared. "Now, I'll clean the hall windows."

Jennings followed like shadow, taking the bucket.

No sooner had they gone than Clutching Hand stealthily came from behind the portieres.

One of the maids was sweeping in the hall as Dan went toward the window, about to wash it.

"I wonder whether I locked these windows?" muttered Jennings, pausing in the hallway. "I guess I'd better make sure."

He had taken only a step toward the library again, when Dan watchfully caught sight of him. It would never do to have Jennings snooping around there now. Quick action was necessary. Dan knocked over a costly Sevres vase.

"There—clumsy—see what you've done!" berated Jennings, starting to pick up the pieces.

Dan had acted his part well and promptly. In the library Clutching Hand was busily engaged at that moment beside the secret panel searching for the spring that released it. He ran his finger along

the woodwork, pausing here and there without succeeding.

"Confound it!" he muttered, searching feverishly.

Kennedy, having made the arrangements with the telephone company by which he had a clear wire from the Dodge house to his library, had rejoined me there and was putting the finishing touches to his installation of the vocophone.

Every now and then he would switch it on, and we would listen in as he demonstrated the wonderful little instrument to me. We had heard the window cleaner and Jennings, but thought nothing of it at the time.

Once, however, Craig paused, and I saw him listening more intently than usual.

"They've gone out," he muttered, "but surely there is someone in the Dodge library."

I listened, too. The thing was so sensitive that even a whisper could be magnified, and I certainly did hear something.

Kennedy frowned. What was that scratching noise? Could it be Jennings? Perhaps it was Rusty.

Just then we could distinguish a sound as though someone had moved about.

"No—that's not Jennings," cried Craig. "He went out."

He looked at me a moment. The same stealthy noise was repeated.

"It's the Clutching Hand!" he exclaimed, excitedly.

A moment later Dan hurried into the Dodge library.

"For heaven's sake, Chief, hurry!" he whispered hoarsely. "The falsers must have fallen down. The girl herself is coming!"

Dan himself had not time to waste. He retreated into the hallway just as Jennings was opening the door for Elaine.

Marie took her wraps and left her, while Elaine handed her numerous packages to Jennings.

Dan watched every motion.

"Put them away, Jennings," she said softly.

Jennings had obeyed and gone upstairs. Elaine moved toward the library. Dan took a quiet step or two behind her, in the same direction.

In the library Clutching Hand was now frantically searching for the spring. He heard Elaine coming and dodged behind the curtains again just as she entered.

With a hasty look about, she saw no one. Then she went quickly to the panel, found the spring and pressed it. So many queer things had happened to her since she went out that she had begun to worry over the safety of the papers.

The panel opened. They were there, all right. She opened the box and took them out, hesitating to break the seal before Kennedy arrived.

Stealthy and tiger-like, the Clutching Hand crept up behind her. As he did so Dan gazed in through the portieres on the hall.

With a spring, Clutching Hand leaped at Elaine, snatching at the papers. Elaine clung to them tenaciously, in spite of the surprise, and they struggled for them, Clutching Hand holding one hand over her mouth to prevent her screaming. Instantly Dan was there, aiding his chief.

"Choke her! Strangle her! Don't let her scream!" he growled out.

They fought viciously. Would they succeed? It was too desperate, unscrupulous men against one frail girl.

Suddenly, from the man in armor in the corner, as if by a miracle, came a deep, loud voice.

"Help! Help! Murder! Police! They are strangling me!"

The effect was terrible.

Clutching Hand and Dan, hardened in crime as they were, fell back, dazed, overcome for the moment at the startling effect.

They looked about. Not a soul.

Then, to their utter consternation, from the visor of the helmet again came the deep, vibrating warning.

"Help! Murder! Police!"

Kennedy and I had been listening over the vocophone, for the moment, nonplused at the fellow's darning.

Then we heard from the uncanny instrument: "For Heaven's sake, Chief, hurry! The falsers have fallen down. The girl herself is coming!"

What it meant we did not know. But Craig was almost beside himself, as he ordered me to try to get the police by telephone, if there was any way to block them. Only instant action would count, however. What to do?

He could hear the master criminal plainly fumbling now.

"Yes, that's the Clutching Hand," he repeated. "Wait," I cautioned, "someone else is coming!"