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Mr. Arnold Daly **"Craig Kennedy"**
The Famous Scientific Detective of Fiction.
Mr. Edwin Arden **Wu-Fang**
The Chinese Master Criminal
WRITTEN BY ARTHUR B. REEVE
*The Well-Known Novelist and the
 Creator of the "Craig Kennedy" Stories*
**Dramatized into a Photo-Play by Chas. W. Goddard,
 Author of "The Perils of Pauline."**

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SYNOPSIS PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

The New York police are mystified by a series of murders and other crimes. The principal clue to the criminals is a warning letter which is sent to the victims, signed with a "clutching hand." The latest victim of the mysterious assassin is Taylor Deane, the wealthy insurance president. His daughter, Elaine, employs Craig Kennedy, the famous scientific detective, to try to unravel the mystery. What Kennedy accomplishes is told by his friend Jameson a newspaper man.

Each chapter deals with a new plot against the lives of Kennedy and Elaine, but each time the master criminal is defeated by the marvelous skill of Kennedy. At last Kennedy discovers the "clutching hand" to be Elaine's trusted lawyer, Bennett.

With Bennett gone, Elaine and Kennedy are confronted by Wu Fang, a Chinese criminal. His continuous plotting against their lives brings new perils to Elaine and call for greater skill on the part of Kennedy. Wu Fang plans the kidnapping of Elaine to revenge the loss of Tony Shi. He accomplishes this by first kidnaping the Dodge chauffeur. At this time Elaine is put on board a schooner which is returning to China after unloading a cargo of opium. A carrier piloted gives the clue for locating the opium and Elaine and Kennedy follow the wireless telephone invented by Kennedy.

CHAPTER XXIII

The Supreme Test

Elaine had dropped in one afternoon to see Kennedy at the laboratory.

Craig was working over a straight-backed chair which stood close to the wall. On the arms were short straps, apparently to fasten down the arms of the sitter.

As they chatted Elaine watched Craig curiously, examining the chair and feeling the left arm, on which was placed a metal disc in such a way that the wrist of anyone sitting in the chair would be strapped in contact with it. Finally Kennedy attached a pair of electric wires from beneath the chair arm, connecting with the disc and running down one of the legs, thence through a crack in the floor to the back room of the laboratory.

"What is it?" asked Elaine. "It looks like a death chair."

"Scarcely," remarked Craig, assuming a medical tone. "This disc—well, it registers a pulse which has a single hand, evidently intended to be swung around by some force through the graduated scale on its face. This is the sphygmograph—a scientific third degree. The disc, indicating both the thoughts and feelings through the pressure of the blood, sits down in the chair, I'll show you."

"Give me a penny for my thoughts," queried Elaine receptively, sitting down. Before she knew it, Craig had lightly strapped her arms and had picked up the dial now attached to the wires leading to the disc. He had done up the arm of the chair, still holding the dial in his hand.

"I have another hand stole about Elaine's shoulders. She did not resist. Kennedy was looking at the dial. The pointer which had been at rest at zero began slowly to turn through several degrees.

"You have a good, strong, healthy, normal heart," remarked Craig, assuming a medical tone. "This dial—well, it registers a pulse that only that consummate diagnostician, little Dan Cupid, can explain."

He held the dial before her with a merry laugh. Elaine did not know quite what to make of it. Had he scientific fever stolen a march on her? She looked at him with her lip. But she could not help being impressed, even though she did not quite understand.

"Please—unfasten the straps, Craig," she said in pretty confusion.

"Gladly—now," he hastened.

At which Elaine blushed even deeper.

I was on my way up from the Star office when I happened to spy a face in the crowd that seemed familiar. It was of a Chinaman, and although I could not just place him, I knew that I had seen him somewhere before. I looked after him intently a moment as he passed. Surely this was one of Wu Fang's messengers. I decided to play detective.

Not many minutes before, down in that secret den in which the serpent, Wu, conducted his villainous, that worthy had been at work again. I was with subtle satisfaction, he had bid in his hand, which was carefully gloved in rubber, a small glass tube, perhaps three-quarters of an inch long and not over an eighth of an inch in diameter.

In the tube was a minute, but almost priceless particle of this strange element, radium.

For a moment Wu regarded it, then took up a handkerchief that lay before him. Already he had ripped a slit or two from the seams in the hem. He slipped the little radium tube into the hem of the handkerchief. Then he tapped a bell on the table and a few seconds later a Chinese servant entered.

While he had been waiting, Wu had hastily written a note. Carefully he folded up the handkerchief and laid it in a small lead case. As the servant bowed, Wu fastened and sealed the letter. "Here," he said shortly, "take this letter and the other thing to Inez. You

She did not, however. Nervously, her hand gripped the table and moved along toward the secret knob.

Kennedy noticed it. But he had not moved his chair from the position in which it had been placed for me. At that moment, though, his eye fell on my glove which I had inadvertently dropped on the floor. He reached down and picked it up.

As he did so, the bar in the wall flew out just missing his head as he bent over.

Seeing that her scheme had failed, Inez made a dash for the door. Instantly Kennedy took in the situation. He sprang to his feet, followed and seized her.

"Not so fast, young lady," he muttered as he grasped her arm.

Then he stood there a minute examining my glove.

Elaine, on her return from the laboratory, had gone to the conservatory of the Dodge house and there was busy pruning the rose bushes, now and then plucking a flower.

Once she happened to glance up at the end nearest the street. She could see a strolling gypsy going by, and the gypsy, apparently, had spied her through the open window.

"Good afternoon, mistress," greeted the gypsy coming up to the fence. "Wouldn't you like to have me read your fortune?"

"Yes," she said, "I don't believe a word you fortune tellers say. But I would like to have you try," she added, as she led the fortune teller through the greens.

The conservatory just then and looked inquiringly at Elaine as she saw her strange companion.

"I'm going to have my fortune read, auntie," laughed her niece. "Don't you want yours?"

"You silly girl," smiled Aunt Josephine. Indulently.

The gypsy seated Elaine at a table and she started in various ways to tell her fortune—a very difficult thing for her to do with all the information she had.

Sitting opposite Elaine, she took Elaine's hand a looked at it carefully. "You are in danger from a powerful Oriental criminal," announced the gypsy at last.

Elaine was to say the least, impressed. "He is a very dangerous man," went on the gypsy, pretending to read it in Elaine's hand.

"And that is not all," the gypsy hinted. "In darkness I could make you see the vision of your persecutor and his den." She nodded knowingly at Elaine and at the same time, from a fold in her dress, drew out the lead case, managed to open it and took out the handkerchief. Above the table she twisted it into a flat band.

"Let me show you," she said, handing the handkerchief to Elaine. "Tie that over your eyes."

Elaine was to say the least, impressed. "He is a very dangerous man," went on the gypsy, pretending to read it in Elaine's hand.

"And that is not all," the gypsy hinted. "In darkness I could make you see the vision of your persecutor and his den." She nodded knowingly at Elaine and at the same time, from a fold in her dress, drew out the lead case, managed to open it and took out the handkerchief. Above the table she twisted it into a flat band.

"Do you see anything?" she asked. "Not yet," returned Elaine. "Try—let yourself go—forget this room, forget time," urged the gypsy.

Craig looked up from my glove to the face of Inez.

"Where is Mr. Jameson?" he demanded sternly.

"I don't know," she replied, facing him defiantly.

As they entered her boudoir, Kennedy saw my foot protruding from the blanket she had thrown over me. He pulled it off.

"Well," he exclaimed, starting back, "I'll be—"

"His exclamation was cut short by the ringing of the telephone bell. Inez took a step toward it.

"None of that," interrupted Kennedy, stopping it. "You keep quiet. I'll answer it. Hello!"

It seemed that perhaps half an hour after he had dispatched the messenger to Inez, Wu decided to call her up to see whether everything was going as he had planned. He had asked for her number. As the operator gave him the call he heard a man's voice answering.

"Instantly he was all suspicion. He waited to hear no more, but quickly hung up the receiver.

So it happened that Kennedy got no answer. "Hello—hello!" he repeated. Still there was no answer.

For a moment he looked at Inez. "You have a remarkable face," he remarked at length. "Your composure is wonderful. But, young lady, I believe that that was your Chinese friend, Wu Fang. At any rate I am going to try to find out."

At last Craig succeeded in getting back the operator.

"Do you think you can locate that call?" he asked.

"As he held the wire he glanced meaningfully at Inez. She did not move a muscle.

"No, I can't locate it exactly," came back the reply a minute later from the girl at the telephone exchange. "But it came from Chinatown—somewhere on Pell street, I think."

Kennedy thanked her, hung up the receiver and faced Inez. He was just in time to catch her about to destroy Wu's message. Seizing her hand he bent it back until her fingers unclasped. There was the crumpled note. He took it and read:

"Have her blind the enclosed over her eyes. If in place three minutes, blindness will result within a few days."

Craig seized the telephone and called the Dodge house.

Some minutes passed after Elaine had bound the handkerchief over her eyes. She sat opposite the gypsy, but try as she would, she could see no vision that she did not herself conjure up.

"My Kennedy on the telephone," announced Jennings on the telephone, "announced Jennings on the telephone," announced Jennings on the telephone. "Aunt Josephine had been watching the

Then, suddenly, he recollected. "Oh, by the way," he exclaimed, "I've had Walter take a woman over to the laboratory. He must be there by this time. I wish that you would get your things on and go over with me. I think that you can help me get something out of her. She's as cool, calm and calculating as a sphinx. But I have a scheme that may lead us at last up to this devilish Chinaman."

Left alone with Inez, I began to follow out Kennedy's instructions.

I did not know it at the time, but just as we were about to start and were moving toward the door the gypsy, breathless and fagged, reached the hallway of the apartment. She was about to go in when she heard Inez and myself go out. She dropped back into the convenient shelter which Kennedy had used before and when we came out we did not see anyone in the hall. As we disappeared she emerged and cautiously followed us.

In spite of my fears, Inez went without a scene to the laboratory. We entered, I at least not knowing that a pair of black eyes watched every movement. The fake gypsy saw us go in, then hastily came out of a doorway into which she had slipped and hurried downstairs.

"Sit down—there," I directed, pointing to a chair.

Inez obeyed coolly. I watched her minutely.

It was not long after I arrived, however, that Kennedy and Elaine joined me at the laboratory.

Kennedy had evidently carefully prepared just what he intended to do. Quickly he forced Inez into the chair which he had already shown Elaine and fastened the straps about her arms.

"Walter, will you and Elaine go into the next room?" he asked as he finished securing the woman.

A moment later he followed, carrying the dial of the sphygmograph. He fastened it to the concealed wires that connected it with the arms of the chair, describing to us in a whisper the action of the strange little instrument which by blood pressure read not only the diseases of the heart, but even the secret emotions.

He had purposely left the door between the front and back rooms ajar, but he did not intend that Inez should hear this explanation. "We know that Wu Fang's headquarters are on Pell street," he concluded to us in a muffled tone. "The sphygmograph will tell us the number if we ask her the right questions. She may keep silent, but she cannot conceal her feelings from this instrument."

Already, although we did not know it, the gypsy had gone straight to Wu Fang's apartment. Wu had been getting anxious about his scheme when his servant announced that Inez's maid was outside.

"Bring her in immediately," Wu thundered. The maid came in, frightened, blurring out what had happened to her and what she had seen at the apartment of her mistress. Wu listened, his face scarcely repressing the raging fury he felt.

It was only a few minutes after he had been warned by the gypsy that Wu himself glided into the hall leading to the main room of the laboratory. He listened a moment, then, hearing nothing, was about to open the door with his skeleton key. As he started to do so his eye fell on the fire escape outside.

He reconsidered. Perhaps it would be best to reconnoiter. Snake-like, he wormed his way up the fire escape which led to the back room. There, as we grouped ourselves about the sphygmograph while Kennedy explained his plan, Wu's sinister face gazed in at us for a moment, then withdrew. Silently he made his way down again to the ground.

In the back room Kennedy took his place near the doorway, while Elaine and I bent over the dial.

"Now, Walter," he began in an assumed rhetorical tone, "you remember we traced that fellow Wu Fang to Pell street. Let me see, what was that number? One?"

"He paused. I saw the needle jump slightly at the mention of Pell street, then fall back at the number "one."

"Two?" went on Kennedy.

The needle scarcely oscillated.

"Three—four—five," came slowly. Inez's face, though we could not see it, was tense and set. She seemed determined not to betray a thing. Yet the harder she tried to control the outward expression of her feelings the more she betrayed herself by the inward blood pressure which the uncanny little instrument before us recorded.

As Kennedy kept on counting the indicator slowly but steadily rose, registering her suppressed emotion. Elaine and I watched the dial, bending over it with intense interest.

Outside in the hall Wu had again come to the laboratory door. This time he drew out his key and softly opened it and entered. For a moment he stood, confronting Inez, alone in the chair. Quickly he raised his fingers to his lips, indicating silence.

Kennedy kept on counting. As he neared the right number Wu drew a revolver and raised it high over his head. Twice he shot into the air.

Suddenly, just before the shots, the dial had unaccountably jumped ten or a dozen points. What did it mean? I held it up and Kennedy looked at it in wonder. He was about to take a step toward the laboratory when the pistol shots rang out. The dial hand fell back to zero.

We rushed into the laboratory. Inez lay back in the chair, apparently dead. Twice, he shot into the air, but the ball door was open.

"Come on," shouted Kennedy, hurrying out into the hall, as I was about to stop before Inez.

I followed and Elaine came along after me, pausing at the door to watch us run down the hall.

Slowly a cabinet under the laboratory table, back of her, swung over and the evil, murderous face of the Chinese master criminal appeared from the refuge to which he had dropped after the shots which he had fired to frighten Inez. Silently he crept toward Elaine, standing with her back to him.

With one powerful movement, he swept Elaine back into the laboratory and to the floor and slammed the door, locking it. Another instant and he ran to Inez and unfasted her. She had merely fainted and was now coming to.

Down the hall we had discovered no one, when suddenly we heard the stifled scream of Elaine. Back we rushed to the door. But it was locked and jammed.

We had finished releasing Inez by this time and, with her, rushed into the back room. As he did so, Elaine managed to get to the window and follow in time to see Wu smash the window to the fire escape with a chair and half shove Inez through to safety.

He was about to follow when he spied the sphygmograph and seized it. That brought him face to face with Elaine. She snatched the record from him. With an oath he struggled with her for it. By this time Kennedy and I had forced the door and were in the outer laboratory. Wu had bent Elaine back over the table and had drawn a long knife. As he poised it over her, he heard us coming. Our shouts seemed to give Elaine redoubled strength. She broke away just as Wu stabbed furiously, and the knife point was deflected by the sphygmograph. There was not an instant to be lost, and Wu fairly dove out of the window. As we rushed in, Kennedy paused to reassure himself of Elaine's safety, but I plunged after Wu, my revolver drawn.

Wildly I shot down from the window at his retreating form. He had almost reached the ground when I saw him stagger and fall the rest of the way. One of my shots had taken effect, but I had used them all.

I started after him. But as he slid the last two or three steps into a heap on the ground, Inez caught him in her arms. Half supporting, half pulling, she managed to assist the dazed and wounded criminal along. At the curb was a closed car with a driver, waiting. She shoved him in and tumbled in after him herself, as the car moved swiftly away.

By this time I had reached the ground and receded my gun as I ran along. I fired several shots. But, though I struck the car, I do not think I did any damage, for it continued to gain speed. The chase was hopeless and I stopped, disgusted.

Back in the laboratory, as I returned through the window, I saw that the strain had been too much for Elaine. Now that it was over, she had fainted and Kennedy was just bringing her around.

"Confound him," I exclaimed. "I wounded him, but that girl got him away from us again."

"Oh," murmured Elaine, faintly catching my words. "I heard the shots. I was hoping you had ended it all, this time."

For the moment, in his relief at seeing Elaine still alive, Kennedy seemed to have forgotten all about Wu. My words recalled him.

"Never mind," he reassured, as he tapped the little sphygmograph. "Not counting the little jump of the indicator when Inez discovered Wu before her, it registered the highest tension when I mentioned number fourteen, Pell street. We shall find his den not far from that."

We gathered about Craig while Elaine looked at him, elated.

"Then you have forged the last link," she cried, setting both his hands in her own.

Kennedy merely smiled and shook his head gravely.

(To be Continued.)

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