

The Mystery of the Red Flame

By GEORGE BARTON
Author of 'The World's Greatest Military Spies and Secret Service Agents'

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THIS STARTS THE STORY
Hugh Garland, of the United States customs service, is assigned to discover the whereabouts of a red diamond smuggled into the country on the steamer 'Don Pedro'.

AND HERE IT CONTINUES
That note," he said impressively, "is one of the bills which was drawn from the hand of Colonel Wharton. Query: How did it come into the possession of this diamond dealer?"

"That bank note was one bit of evidence. Now back and see if you can find anything else that might furnish a clue to the exact time and date. I looked for some time and then pointed to the small latch key.

"That latch key is a very important clue. You have all the characteristics of a good detective. I thought the same thing, but so far I haven't been able to do anything with it. I think it is that this is the key of a room where Glazier has hidden some of his secrets. Query: Where is the room?"

"I have your key, but I haven't been able to do anything with it. I turned to the man in the shop without result. This key must belong to some door in another part of the city. My theory is that it is a vacant house—that is, an unoccupied house. But there are a thousand such houses in this city and I wouldn't know where to start. Besides, even if I did, when could we ever locate such a place?"

"You couldn't do it alone, of course. But why not get the assistance of the city police?" Kelly called a good sound. He led you to a hundred of his men for a day. Barnes stared at me. "Hundred men with one key—Hugh, you must have been drinking."

"Give me that key," I said, "and in an hour I'll have a hundred dupes made for you."

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local force, sat at a desk in a room filled with tobacco smoke. He recognized Barnes through the haze. "Hello," he cried, "in trouble?"

"That's a fine way to greet an old friend," he retorted. Kelly laughed. "You fellows are all the same. You loathe the regular police and call us a bunch of loafs, but when you get a nut you can't crack you bring it here. Now, what's the matter with you?"

"I've just found a new thing. The few business men who pull off anything like that here?" Kelly called a good sound. He led you to a hundred of his men for a day.

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," sneered the veteran. "We used the relation and it may help to brush the cobwebs out of our heads."

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she was willing to give me the information. She disliked me, she distrusted me—she seemed to hate me. I tried to face the situation honestly. What had happened to change this state of affairs? I had learned that she was duped by an anonymous letter, that she had removed the Red Diamond from Colonel Wharton's safe, and that later had probably been stolen from her by some other person. I was naturally delighted to learn that Dora, so well known, was guiltless in the matter. My mind was partially relieved, but would that I could have changed her feelings toward me. I feared not.

"I'm glad you're so sure. But how did you find out that Dora was innocent? The diamond dealer who had been taken to the hospital by the police had been taken to the hospital by the police."

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"Here's a fresh bit of evidence sent to us from Hapgood," I said. He read it through hastily and then reread it with great care. After that he rubbed his chin reflectively and gazed into space.

"This is good stuff," he said, finally. "The question is, who sent it to the girl?"

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