

Novelized from the Photo Play of the Same Name. Produced by the Universal Film Manufacturing Company,

SYNOPSIS.

Banford Quest, master criminologist of the world, finds that in bringing to justice Macdougal, the murderer of Lord Ashleigh's daughter, he has but just begun a life-and-death struggle with a mysterious master criminal. In a hidden hut in Professor Ashleigh's garden he has seer an ape skeleton and a living creature, half monkey, half man, destroyed by fire. In his rooms have appeared black boxes containing notes, signed by a pair of arin-less hands. Laura and Lenora, his assistants, suspect Craig, the professor's sorvant, of a double murder. The black boxes continue to appear in uncanny fashion. Craig, trapped, escapes to England. Quest, Lenora and the professor follow him. Lord Ashleigh is murdered by the hands. Craig, captured, escapes to Port Said. Quest and his party follow, and beyond into the desert. They are captured by Mongara, escape with Craig as their captive, and turn him over to Inspector French in San Francisco. He escapes in a train wreck, outgenerals his pursuers, and starts back to New York.

## FOURTEENTH INSTALLMENT

A BOLT FROM THE BLUE.

CHAPTER XXXI.

There was a peculiar, almost fore boding silence about the camp that morning when Laura returned from her early ride. The only living person to be seen was the Chinaman, sitting on a stool in front of the wagon with a dish of potatoes between his knees. "Say, where's everyone?" Laura

sang out, after she had looked into Lenora's tent and found it empty.

The Chinaman looked up at her malevolently.
"All gone," he announced. "Cow

boys gone workee. Missee gone hurry up find Mr. Quest."

Laura hesitated, puzzled. Just ther the professor came cantering in with a bundle of grass in his hand. He glanced down at the Chinaman.

"Good morning, Miss Laura!" he said. "You don't seem to be getting on with our friend here," he added in an undertone.

"Pshaw!" she answered. "Who cares what a chink thinks! The fellow's an idiot. I'm worried, professor. Lonora's gone out after Mr. Quest and the inspector. She wasn't fit to ride a horse. I can't make out why she's attempted it."

The professor unslung some fieldglasses from his shoulder and gazed steadily southward.
"It is just possible," he said, softly,

"that she may have received a warning of that."

He pointed with his forefinger. Laura peered forward. There was something which seemed to be just a faint cloud upon the horizon. The professor handed her his glasses.

"Why, it's a fire!" she cried. The professor nodded.

"Just a prairie fire," he replied-"very dangerous, though, these dry seasons. The flames move so quickly that if you happen to be in a certain position you might easily be cut off." Laura turned her horse round.

"Come on, professor!" she ex-aimed. "That's what it is. Lenora's gone to try and warn the others."

They rode to the very edge of the tract of country which was temporarily enveloped in smoke and flame. Here they pulled in their horses and professor looked thoughtfully through his field glasses.

Laura gave a little cry and pointed her riding whip. About twenty yards farther on, by the side of the road, was a small white object. She cantered on, swung herself from her horse and picked it up.
"Lenora's handkerchie!!" she cried.

The professor waved his arm west-

"Here come Quest and the inspector. They are making a circuit to avoid the fire. The cowboy with them mast have shown them the way. We'd better hurry up and find out if they've seen anything of Miss Lenora."

They galloped across the rough towards the little party, who were now clearly in sight

From the center of one of the burning patches they saw a riderless horse gallop out, stop for a moment with his head simost between his forelegs, shake himself furiously, and gallop blindly on again.

Laura would have turned her horse, but the professor checked her.
"Let us wait for Quest," he advised

The cowboy, riding a little behin the two others, had unlimbered his lariat, swung it over his head and secured the runaway. Quest galloped up to where Laura and the professor were

waving frantically.
"Say, that's some fire!" Quest ex clatured. "Did you people come out to

"No, we came to find Lenors!" Laura enawered, breathlessly, "That's her horse. She started to meet you She must be somewhere—" he must be somewhere—"
"Lenora?" Quest Interrupted, flerce

ly. "What do you mean?" Laura "When I got back to camp," Laura "When I wasn't of when I got back to camp, Laura continued, rapidly, "there wasn't a soul there except the Chinaman. He told me that Lenora had ridden off a few minutes before to find you. We carae to look for her. We found her handkerchief on the road there, and that's her horse."

Quest did not wait for another word He jumped a rough bush of scrub on the right-hand side, galloped over the ground, which was already hot with the coming fire, and followed along down the road which Lenora had passed. When he came to the first bend, he could hear the roar of flames in the trees. A volume of smoke al-most blinded him; his horse became wholly unmanageable. He slipped from the saddle and ran on, staggering from right to left like a drunken man About forty yards along the road, Lenora was lying in the dust. A volume of smoke rushed over her. The tree under which she had collapsed was already afire. A twig fell from it as Quest staggered up, and her skirt be-

gan to smoulder. He tore off his coat, wrapped it around her, beat out the fire which was already blazing at her feet and snatched her into his arms. She opened her eyes for a moment. "Where are we?" she whispered "The fire!" "That's all right," Quest shouted

"We'll be out of it in a moment. Hold tight to my neck." 'Say, that was a close shave," he faltered, as he laid Lenora upon the ground. "Another five minuteswe won't talk about it. Let's lift her on to your horse, Laura, and get back

CHAPTER XXXII.

to the camp."

The professor laid down his book and gazed with an amiable smile towards Quest and Lenora.

"I fear," he remarked, dolefully, "that my little treatise on the fauna of the northern Orinoco scarcely appeals to you, Mr. Quest." Quest, whose arm was in a sling, but

who was otherwise none the worse for his recent adventure, pointed out of "Don't you believe it, professor," he

begged. "I've been listening to every word. But say, Lenora, just look at Laura and French!" They all three peered anxiously out of the opening of the tent. Laura and

the inspector were very slowly ap-proaching the cook wagon. Laura was carrying a large bunch of wild flowers, one of which she was in the act of fastening in French's button

"That fellow French has got grit," Quest declared. "He sticks to it all the time. He'll win out with Laura in the end, you mark my words."

"We've wired for them to meet Craig," Quest said, after a short silence. "I only hope they don't let him slip through their fingers. I haven't much feith in his promise to turn up at the professor's. Let's see what Laura and French have to say." . .

"Can't see any sense in staying on here any longer," was French's imme-diate decision, "so long as you two invalids feel that you can stick the Besides, we're using up journey. these fellows' hospitality."

They busied themselves for the next hour or two, making preparations. After their evening meal the two men walked with Lenora and Laura to their tent.

"I think you girls had better go to bed," Quest suggested. "Try and get a long night's sleep."

'That's all very well," French re marked, "but it's only eight o'clock. What about a stroll, Miss Laura, just up to the ridge?" Laura hesitated for a moment and

glanced towards Lenora.
"Please go," the latter begged. "I really don't feel like roing to sleep

just vet." 'I'll look after Lenora," Quest prom ised. "You have your walk. There's the professor sitting outside his tent. Wouldn't you like to take him with

Laura glanced indign atly at aim as they strolled out, and Lenora laughed

softly. "How dared you suggest such thing!" she murmured to Quest. "Do look at theia The inspector wants her to take as watch and she can't quite make up her mind about it. Why, Laura's getting positively frivolous."

When the inspector returned Quest

tor returned Quest handed him a t-Aegram: To Inspector French, Aliguez, N. M .: Very sorry. Craig gave us all after leaving dopot. Nices disappeared from address given. No cluss at present.

When are you returning? ... Prencil swore softly for a mo Then he dropped into a chair.
"This," he declared, "is our unlucky

CHAPTER XXXIIL

The woman who had just laid the cloth his a homely evening meal smiled across at the girl who stood

"It's all ready now directly bour uncle comes home," she announced.

Mrs. Malony came to the girl's

"Your poor uncle looks as though a little peace would do him good," she remarked,

The girl sighed. # %

"If only I could do something for she murmured. "He's in some kind of trouble,

Mrs. Malony observed. 'He is not what you might call a commu nicative person, but it's easy to see that he is far from being happy in himself. You'll ring when you're ready, Miss Mary?" The door was suddenly opened and

Craig entered.

"Look across the road," he begged. "Tell me if there is a man in a blue serge suit and a bowler hat, smoking a cigar, looking across here.

Mrs. Malony and the girl both obeyed. The girl was the first to speak.

"Yes," she answered. "He is looking straight at these windows." Craig groaned and sank down upon

"Leave us, if you please, Mrs. Ma-

lony," he ordered. "I'll ring when I'm ready. The landlady left the room silent ... The girl came over to her uncle and

threw her arm around his neck. He patted her head, felt in his pockets and drew out - little paper bag, from which he shook a banch of vio-

"How kind you are to me!" she exclaimed. "You think of everything!" He sighed

"If I had had you for a little longer, Mary," he said, "perhaps I should have been a better man. Go to the window, please, and tell me if that man is

She crossed the room with light footsteps. Presently she returned. "He is just crossing the street." she announced. "I think that he seems to be coming here."

Craig took the girl for a minute into his arms.

"Good-by, dear," he said. "I want you to take this paper and keep it carefully. You will be cared for always, but I must go." "But where must you go?" she

asked, bewildered. "I have an appointment at Professor Ashleigh's," he told her. "I cannot tell you anything more than that.

He kissed her for a moment passionately. Then suddenly he tore him-self away. She heard him run lightly down the stairs. Some instinct led her to the back window. She saw him emerge from the house and pass down the yard. Then she went to the front. The man in the blue serge was talking to the landlady below. She sank into a chair, puzzled and unhappy. Then she heard heavy footsteps. The door was opened. The man in the blue serge suit entered, followed by the protest-

ing landlady. "There's no sense in coming here to worry the young lady," Mrs. Malony declared, irritably. "As for Mr. Craig, I told you that he'd gone out."

"Gone out, eh?" the man repeated, speaking in a thick, disagrecable tone Why, I watched him in here not ten minutes ago. Now then, young lady,



"I Cannot Tell You Anything More Good-By."

guess you'd better cough up the truth Where's this precious uncle of yours?"
"My uncle has gono out," the girl replied, drawing herself up. "He left five minutes ago."

"What's that in your hand?" he de manded. "Something my uncle gave me be

fore he went out," the girl replied. "I haven't looked at it yet myself." "Give it here," he ordered. She spread it out upon the table. You may look at it if you choose,

she agreed. "My uncle did not tell me "ot to show it to anyone." They read it together. The few lines seemed to be written with great care. They took, indeed, the form of a legal document, to which was af-

fixed the seal of a notary and the "i, John Craig, being about to re-ceive the just punishment for all my ains, hereby bequeath to my nicce, Mary Carlton, all moneys and prop-erty belonging to me, a list of which she will find at this address. I make one condition only of my bequest, and I beg my niece to ferve. 'ly respect it. It is that she never of her own coneent or knowledge speak to anyone of the name of Ashleigh, or associate th any of that name.

JOHN CRAIG.
The man folded up the paper.
"I'll take care of this," he said, "It's ours, right enough. We'll just need a borrow it for a time. Go and get our hat and cost on, miss."

"He Fought Too Hard," Quest Said Gravely, "He is Dead!"

to him, that I was to remain here." "And remain here she shall, as long as she likes." Mrs. Malony insisted 'I've given my promise, too, to look after her, and Mr. Craig knows that I am an honest woman."

uncle told me, if gnything happened

"You may be that," the man replied, "but it's just as well for you both to understand this. I'm from the police and what I say goes. No harm will come to the girl, Mrs. Malony, and she shall come back here, but for the present she is going to accompany me to headquarters. If you make any trouble, I only have to blow my whistle and I can fill your house with policemen."

"T'll go," the girl whispered. In silence she put on her hat and coat, in silence she drave with him to the police station, where she was shown at once into the inspector's office. The man who had brought her whispered for a moment or two with his chief and handed him the paper. Inspector French read it and whis-

tled softly. He took up the telephone by his side. "Say, you've something of a find he remarked to the plainclothes man. "Put me through to Mr. Quest, please," he added, speaking into the receiver.

The two men whispered together. The girl stole from her place and turned over rapidly the pages, of a directory which was on the round table before her. She found the "A's" quickly. 'Her eye fell upon the name of Ashleigh. She repeated the address to herself and glanced around. The two men were still whispering. For the moment she was forgotten. She stole on tiptoe across the room, ran down the stone steps and hastened into the street.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The professor, who was comfort ably seated in Quest's favorite easy chair, glanced at his watch and shook

"I am afraid, my friend," he said, "that Craig's nerve has failed him. A voluntary surrender was p\_rhaps too much to hope for." Quest smoked for a moment in a

His servant entered bearing a note. "This was left a few minutes ago,

sir," he announced, "by a messenger boy. There was no answer required." The man retired. Quest unfolded the sheet of paper. His expression suddenly changed. "Listen!" he exclaimed

To Sanford Quest: Gather your people in Professor Ashleigh's library at ten o'clock to night. I will be there and tell you my whole story. JOHN CRAIG.

The professor sat for a moment

"Then he meant it after all!" h exclaimed at last. "Seems like it," Quest admitted. "I'll

just telephone to French." The professor rose to his feet, knocked the ash from his cigar, struggled into his coat and took up his hat. Then he waited until Quest had completed his conversation. The latter's face had grown grave and puzzled. It was obvious that he was receiving in formation of some importance. He put down the instrument at last with curt word of farewell.

The professor moved towards th "If only this may prove to be the

end!" he sighed. Quest spent the next hour or so in restless deliberations. There were still many things which puzzled him. At about a quarter past nine Lenora and Laura arrived, dressed for their "I'm afraid we are in for a bac

thunderstorm, girls," Quest remarked. Laura laughed. "Who cares? The automobile's "Who cares?" there, Mr. Quest."

there, Mr. Quest."

"Let's go, then!" he replied.

They descended into the street and drove to the professor's house in silence. Even Laura was feeling the strain of these last hours of anxiety. On the way they picked up French and a plain-clothes man and the whole party arrived at their destination just as the storm broke. The professor

"I shall not," the girl objected. "My met them in the hall. He, too, seemed to have lost to some extent his cue tomary equanimity.

"Come this way, my friends," he in vited. "If Craig keeps his word, he will be here now within a few minutes. This way. They followed him into the library

Chairs were arranged around the table in the middle of the room and they all sat down. The professor took out his watch. It was five minutes to

"In a few minutes," he continued solemnly, "this weight is to be lifted from the minds of all of us. I have come to the conclusion that on this occasion Craig will keep his word. I am not sure, mind, but I believe that he is in the house at this present moment. I have heard movements in the room which belonged to him. I have not interfered. I have been content to wait."

"He has at least not tried escape," Quest remarked. "French here brought news of him. He has been living with his niece very quietly, but without any particular attempt at concealment or any signs of wishing to leave the

"I had that girl brought to my office." French remarked, "barely an hour ago, but she slipped away while we were talking. Say, what's that?"

They all rose quickly to their feet In a momentary lull of the storm they could hear distinctly a girl's shrill calling from outside, followed by the clamor of angry voices. "Gee! I bet that's the girl," French

exclaimed. "She'd been looking up the professor's address in a directory." They all hurried out into the hall. The plainclothes man whom they had left on guard was standing there with his hand upon Craig's collar. The girl, sobbing bitterly, was clinging to his arm. Craig was making desperate afforts to escape. Directly he saw the little party issue from the library, however, the strength seemed to pass from his limbs. He remained in the clutches of his captor, limp and helpless.

"I caught the girl trying to make her way into the house," the latter ex-plained. "She called out and this man came running downstairs, right into my arms."

"It is quite all right," the professor said, in a dignified tone. "You may release them both. Craig was on his way to keep an apointment here at ten o'clock. Quest, will you and the inspector bring him in? Let us resume our places at the table."
The little procession made its way

The girl was still clinging to her uncle. "What are they going to do to you, these people?" she sobbed.

these people?" she sobbed. "They sha'n't hurt you. They sha'n't!" Lenora passed her arm around the "Of course not, dear," she said oothingly. "Your uncle has come of his own free will to answer a few questions, only I think it would be

better if you would let me-

Lenora never finished her sentence. They had reached the entrance now to the library. The professor was standing in the doorway with extended hand, motioning them to take their places at the table. Then, with no form of warning, the room seemed suddenly filled with a blaze of blue light. It came at Arst in a thin flash from the window to the table, became immediately multiplied a thousand times, played round the table in sparks, which suddenly expanded to sheets of leaping, curling flame. The roar of thunder shook the very foundations of the house-and then silence For several seconds not one of them seemed to have the power of speech. An amazing thing had happened. The oak table in the middle of the room was a charred fragment, the chairs were every one blackened remnants. "A thunderbolt!" French gasped at

Quest was the first to cross the room. From the table to the outside window was one charred, black line which had burnt its way through the carpet. He threw open the windows The wire whose course he had fellowed ended here with a little lung of queer substance. He broke it of from the end of the wire, which was absolutely brittle and natureless, and brought it into the room.

"What is it?" Lenora faltered.

"Say, what have you got there?" French echoed.

Quest examined the strange-looking lump of metal steadily. The most curious thing about it seemed to be that it was absolutely sound and showed no signs of damage. He turned to the

"I think you are the only one who will be able to appreciate this, professor," he remarked. "Look!" It is a fragment of opotan-a distinct and wonderful specimen of opotan."

Everyone looked puzzled. "But what," Lenora inquired, "is

"It is a new metal," Quest explained. gravely, "towards which scientists have been directing a great deal of attention lately. It has the power of collecting all the electricity from the air around us. There are a dozen people, at the present moment, conducting experiments with it for the purpose of cheapening electric lights. If we had been in the room ten seconds sooner-"

He paused significantly. Then he swung round on his heel. Craig, a now pitiful object, his hands nervously twitching, his face ghastly, was

cowering in the background. "Your last little effort, Craig?" he

demanded, sternly. Craig made no reply. The profes-sor, who had disappeared for a moment, came back to them.

"There is a smaller room across the hell," he said, "which will do for our

Craig suddenly turned and faced "I have changed my mind," he said. "I have nothing to tell you. Do what you will with me. Take me to the

Tombs, deal with me any way you choose, but I have nothing to say." Quest pointed a threatening finger at him. "Your last voluntary word, perhaps," he said, "but science is still your master, Craig. Science has brought many criminals to their doom. It shall take its turn with you. Bring him along,

French, to my study. There is a way of dealing with him." Quest felt his forehead and found it damp. There were dark rims under his eyes. Before him was Craig, with a little band around his forehead and the mirror where they could all see it. The professor stood a little in the background. Laura and French were side by side, gazing with distended eyes at the blank mirror, and Lenora was doing her best to soothe the terrifled girl. Twice Quest's teeth came

together and once he almost reeled.
"It's the fight of his fife," he muttered at last, "but I've got him." Almost as he spoke they could see Craig's resistance begin to weaken. The tenseness of his form relaxed, Quest's will was triumphing. Slow-ly in the mirror they saw a little ploture creeping from the outline into definite form, a picture of the professor's library. Cral's himself was there

with mortar and trowel, and a black box in his hand. "It's coming!" Lenora moaned. Quest stood perfectly tense. The picture suddenly flashed into brilliant



"I Caught the Girl Trying to Make Her Way Into the House."

clearness. They saw Craig's features with almost lifelike detail. From the corner of that room where the professor was standing, carrie a smothered groan. It was a terrifying, a paralyzing moment. Even the silence seemed charged with awful things. Then suddenly, without any warning, the picture faded completely away. A cry, which was almost a howl of anger, broke from Quest's lips. Craig had fallen sideways from his chair. There was an ominous change in his face Something seemed to have passed from the atmosphere of the root come tense and nameless quality. Quest moved forward and laid his hand on Craig's heart. The girl was on her knees, screaming.

"Take her away," Quest whispered "What about him?" French demand

ed, as Lenora led the girl from the

"He fought too hard," Quest said, gravely. 'He is dead. Professor—'
They all looked around. The spot
where he had been standing was
amply. The professor had gone.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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