

The Adventure of the Blind Clairaudient - Blin
The Saint, September, 1961
The Reminiscences of Solar Pons

Date

Copper/Late November, 1931

Patrick/Summer, 1929

Quotes

- *The most astonishing feats of ratiocination in the history of mankind seem elementary upon elucidation of the steps between premise and conclusion.*

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The Case

Lily MacLain, a blind clairaudient along with her nephew, Theodore Holt, visits Pons and tells him that she will soon be murdered and wants Pons to find the killer after it happens. A client using the false name of Alistair Green blamed MacLain for the ending of his marriage and is threatening her. Pons and Parker take a weeklong trip to the Continent. Upon their return, they discover that MacLain has just been murdered and they rush to her lodgings, where Green, really named Jasper Howells, is in custody.

Comments

- Pons says something that provides a nice summation of his view towards the supernatural. Parker is explaining why clairaudience is ‘charlatanry’ and that it refutes science. Pons responds, “Let us just say it goes against what we know of science at this point of development of man.”

This is similar to something he said in *The Haunted Library* when dealing with a potential ghost: “Ought we not to say, rather, we believe there are certain phenomena which science as yet has not correctly been interpreted or explained?”

- This discussion, among the most interesting in the Pontine Canon, continues and Pons goes on the attack, accusing Parker of believing that Science is to be worshipped. Pons then says, “Scientist though I take pride in being, I would be the last to suggest that our scientific discoveries to date have reached such a stage of perfection that we have achieved ultimate knowledge and no further advances are open to us.” Parker denies saying this and Pons tells him that it was inferred. The detective then shifts the conversation to a more mundane aspect of the investigation.

August Derleth was a master at having Pons rationally discuss the possibility of the supernatural, and then bringing the conversation back to the scientific investigation. We also see it in *The Haunted Library*. It is one example of what fine writer Derleth was.

- Lily MacLain forecasts several of Pons' future cases. She tells him of one in which a bird will serve as an accomplice to a murder (*The Paralytic Mendicant*). She also mentions one involving a suspected werewolf (*The Tottenham Werewolf*). And she foretells of a doctor who gets rid of his first wife, but Pons foils his attempt to get rid of a second (*The Proper Comma*). All three of these cases made their first appearances in *The Memoirs of Solar Pons* in 1951. That is ten years before *The Blind Clairaudient* was first published. This is a rather clever reverse use of foreshadowing.
- Other Pons cases such as *The Tottenham Werewolf*, *The Devil's Footprints* and *The Crouching Dog* have natural explanations. *The Blind Clairaudient* does not completely dispose of the supernatural with its solution. Lily MacLain did correctly predict three cases that Pons would undertake in the future. There is no rational explanation for this.
- Pons makes a deduction that confounds Parker, explains the factors that led to the deduction, and Parker then replies that it was an elementary deduction. This scene, repeated often in the Pontine and Sherlockian Canons, is always enjoyable and does not grow stale with repeated uses.
- As occurs in several other cases, Pons makes an underlying assumption that is the opposite of some other principal player (in this case, Jamison). Jamison believes that Holt told the truth that her mother had spurned a suitor, Gerald King, and that Holt had found Howells bent over his aunt with a knife in his hand.

Pons assumes that Holt lied and his aunt intended to marry King. Holt would then no longer be her heir. Holt's recounting of events regarding Howells is now suspect. It is Pons' assuming the opposite of Jamison that allows him to solve the case.