

The Adventure of the Dorrington Inheritance – Dorr

The Saint Detective Magazine, 1958

The Return of Solar Pons

Date - Copper/February, 1928

The Case

Constance Dorrington comes to Praed Street, fearing for her father's life. She is the daughter of Amos Dorrington, heir to a fortune earned in diamond mining. Her grandfather, Alexander, cheated his two partners out of their rightful shares of the mining company. Amos Dorrington received several threats that seemed to be tied to Alexander Dorrington's actions against his partners. Pons investigates and finds more than was imagined.

Quotes

- *Where there is treasure, Parker, there is also likely to be tribulation.*
- *No one staying at the best hotels could fail to have his footwear as highly polished below the instep as his shoe tops.*

Comments

- Pons and Parker arm themselves for their confrontation with the villain. Pons tells Parker to bring his revolver. The detective himself uses a leaded stick. This harkens back to Sherlock Holmes' use of a weighted riding crop as his favorite weapon, though he was also adept with a single stick. Both Pons and Holmes seem more likely to render an opponent helpless, rather than do them a serious injury. But Parker and Watson are oft armed with a gun should more serious force be needed.
- Doctor Parker and Constance Dorrington meet for the first time in this case, early in 1928. They would marry in early 1933. This is a five-year engagement, which strikes the modern reader as a bit long. Of course, Constance Dorrington receives an emotional shock from the revelations regarding her fiancé, and she was wealthy, likely causing Dr. Parker to move slowly in his courtship.

Constance is the doctor's second wife. His first wife, Louisa, drowned when the Titanic went down. Parker reveals almost nothing about his first marriage, and very little of his second. He tells us more about Solar Pons than about himself.

It is interesting to note that Pons encourages Parker to comfort the rich, attractive, suddenly available Constance. This is an admirable character trait, as the more time Parker spends with her, the less time he would have for adventuring with the detective, as well as writing up the case histories that increased Pons fame. Contrast this with the attitude of Sherlock Holmes, who once accused Watson of being selfish by "deserting him for a wife."

- A key clue that only Pons notices is the quality of polish on a pair of shoes. This is a fine example of the attention Pons pays to details. Parker thought that the shoes were excellently polished, contrasting the two men's powers of observation.
- Dorrington's fictitious Maracot Diamond is compared to the Hope and Kohinoor diamonds. The Hope Diamond is arguably the most famous diamond in the world. The Hope was originally part of a 112 & 3/16 diamond. In 1673, it was cut down to a 67 & 1/8 carat stone by King Louis XIV of France. The diamond disappeared not long after Marie Antoinette's demise in 1791.

The diamond is named after Henry Philip Hope, whose gem collection catalogue included it in 1839. Its provenance can be definitively traced from that time on. At the time of the Dorrington affair, Mrs. Evalyn Walsh McLean of Washington, DC, owned the diamond. It was donated to the Smithsonian in 1958, where it is today. The Hope Diamond is officially 45.25 carats, and classified as a type IIb diamond.



I said that the Hope Diamond is arguably the most famous because the other contender is the Koh-I-Noor, which is believed to be at least 700 years old. The provenance of the diamond has been contentious and its modern history can be traced to 1849. In that year the conquered Punjab region formally became a part of the British Empire and the Queen of England claimed ownership of the Koh-I-Noor. That ownership was contested into the latter part of the twentieth century.

The Koh-I-Noor is currently a part of the Crown Jewels of England (Queen Elizabeth's crown) and weight 105.60 carats (133.4 % larger than the Hope).



