

*The Adventure of the Grice-Paterson Curse – Gric*  
*The Pursuit Detective Story Magazine, November, 1956*  
*The Return of Solar Pons, 1958*

Date - Copper/August, 1927

The Case

Edith Grice-Paterson comes to Praed Street and asks Pons (and Parker) to come to her family estate, the Creepers, on the island of Uffa. Her fiancé, Austen Hanwell, had been found dead in his room there, choked to death, with bruises about his neck and body. There were signs of a violent struggle, but the room was locked and there were no signs of an intruder. Her father and uncle Sydney had died the same way, in the same wing of the house.

Quotes

- Parker: *Pons, a dacoit!*  
Pons: *Pray forgive, Dr. Parker, Miss Grice-Paterson. He is addicted to the reading of the exploits of Dr. Fu Manchu, who employs thugs and dacoits to accomplish his lethal work for him.*
  
- Pons: *Pray spare me that dacoit, Parker. I find it inconceivable that a convenient dacoit would be standing by on call to suit the whims of so reluctant a murderer.*

Comments

- This case was inspired by one of Dr. Watson's famous untold tales. In *The Five Orange Pips* he refers to 'the singular adventures of the Grice Patersons in the island of Uffa.'
  
- This case is unique in the Canon in that the villain has been dead for twelve years. It is also the only instance in which we see Pons save Parker's life with a sword!
  
- Parker is convinced that the nefarious Doctor Fu Manchu is responsible for events. Edith Grice-Paterson tells Pons and Parker that there were 'strangling lines' around the necks of the victims. This reminds Parker of *The Adventure of the Seven Sisters*, when he and Pons were choked into unconsciousness by dacoits working for Fu Manchu.

Parker references the possibility of dacoits three different times. In the first two instances Pons disagrees with him. In the third, he simply ignores Parker's comment. Pons asks Parker later if he has given up his dacoit theory, to which Parker responds "No Pons, I haven't."

- Parker makes a few nice deductions from the letter and envelope Pons hands him. He identifies the scent as belonging to a woman and that she has written in "an agitated hand."

- Pons states that the creepers are a relative of the upas tree. The *Antiaris toxicaria*, or upas tree, is found in Southeast Asia and is part of the mulberry family. It produces a poisonous latex and an unfounded myth reported that it poisoned all within a fifteen-mile radius of it. There are no specific aspects of the upas tree that make it a likely relative of the creepers.
  
- The creepers offer a suspenseful opportunity for a televised account of the case. The viewer would see at the beginning of the show that the creepers strangled Austen Hanwell. Later in the episode, Pons would be examining the creepers, smelling a blossom. The wind would be lightly rustling the creepers, making them look as if they were alive. At any second they could take hold of Pons in front of a horrified Parker.