

*The Adventure of the Missing Huntsman - MissH*  
*The Casebook of Solar Pons, 1965*

Date

Copper/March, 1923  
Pattrick/NA

Quotes

- Pons: *And it may be tantamount to murder to expect Dr. Parker to ride to hounds.*  
Parker: *I believe I can acquit myself as well as you.*  
Pons: *We shall see.*
- *I am not disposed to question what amounts to poetic justice.*

The Case

Diana Pomfroy visits Praed Street. A man had been found in her stables, trampled to death. The same day, Captain Dion Price, her huntsman, disappeared. Pons and Parker travel to Pomfroy Chase for a fox hunt. Another man is found dead during the hunt, apparently trampled by a horse.

Comments

- The first dead man found was wearing one of Captain Price's weskits. A weskit is a waistcoat. There is a resemblance in pronunciation.
- The first dead man found had pistol with one of two bullets fired. It seems like sloppy police work in not searching for the bullet somewhere in the stables.
- Diana Pomfroy tells Pons that the body was found in the stables "almost a month ago." She adds that Captain Price disappeared on the same day. Yet later, she tells Pons that she last saw Price ten days ago. That is inconsistent with "Almost a month."
- Pons references three cases in his clippings file: The Framblehurst Arms murder, the Swansea mystery and the Manchester double murder. Was Pons involved at any of these cases? Likely not at the time of this case, or he would have mentioned something more of them. However, it is possible that Pons was consulted later.
- General Hugh Pomfroy comes across as a "hail, well-met" type of fellow. Nigel Bruce would have been well cast in the part. He does tell us that he knew Bancroft Pons in France during World War I. This is an intriguing tidbit. Bancroft would have been in his early forties at the time. Pomfroy can't believe that he was in the Foreign Office.

We have three possibilities:

- 1) Bancroft was not in the Foreign Office at the time. But if not, then what was his job? Did he leave the Foreign Office to enlist, then return to his duties after the war?

- 2) Bancroft was in the Foreign Office back then and Pomfroy's memory on the matter is faulty.
- 3) Bancroft was in the Foreign Office but did not reveal the fact. Was he working under cover on some assignment?

Surely an enterprising Ponsian will explore this matter some day?

It is amusing to note that the General approaches Pons the next day, convinced that it was Solar, not Bancroft, that he knew in France.

- Pons and Parker return to their room after the hunt. Then occurs an event unparalleled in the Canon. Pons says that he must go out and asks if Parker is coming with him. The reply is quite surprising, "I'm sorry, Pons. I must beg off. An hour afield has given me aches I haven't had for a long time."

Pons chuckles and departs alone. There is no other instance that comes to mind in which Parker declines to assist Pons. Especially by citing discomfort. This is a side of Parker that seems to be an aberration. The faithful companion comes up a bit short in this episode. Pons returns and didn't seem to require Parker's assistance, so it is a case of "no harm, no foul." But it still feels disconcerting.

- The Missing Huntsman is another case when Pons, who elsewhere says that he is not an agent of justice, imposes his own justice. Two men have been killed and left in circumstances that make it appear to be accidents. Pons does feed a few questions to the coroner at the inquest, but he does not tell the police what has happened. In fact, Pons urges the killers to flee for their own safety. Justified? Probably, but Pons serves as a one-person jury in this case.