

*The Adventure of the Spurious Tamerlane - Spur*  
*The Saint Mystery Magazine*, December, 1964  
*The Casebook of Solar Pons*

Date

Copper/July, 1925

Patrick/

Quotes

- Parker: *You astound me!*
- Pons: *It is surely not the first time.*
- *You will remember my credo: when all the impossible explanations have been eliminated, then whatever remains, improbable as it may be, must be the truth.*

The Case

Used bookseller, Joshua Bryant, asks Pons to come down to his stall. Upon his arrival, Pons learns that someone had slipped an extremely rare copy of Edgar Allen Poe's *Tamerlane and Other Poems*. Pons quickly establishes that it is a fake and sets out to find who left it, and why.

Comments

- Pons asks Parker to look at a note and speculate upon its sender, Joshua Bryant. Parker correctly deduces that Bryant is a secondhand book dealer. Pons congratulates Parker in what certainly seems to be a sarcastic manner. "At any time now I can retire to Sussex and keep bees! Is it not remarkable what a little exposure to ordinary ratiocination will do for one."

Pons' reference to beekeeping in Sussex can also be viewed as a jibe at Sherlock Holmes, since nowhere else does Pons evince an interest in such a retirement activity.

- Pons echoes a comment from another case. In *The China Cottage*, when asked if he is a collector, Pons replies, "Only of life's oddities." In this case, Lady Heltsham asks Pons if he is a collector of books. "Say, rather, of circumstances, events and curious happenings," is Pons' response this time.
- Pons performs a sleight of hand trick by basically pointing in another direction and saying "Hey, look over there," which Lady Heltsham does. While his switching the spurious Tamerlane for the original is nicely done, it is amusing to see him utilize a trick which is almost a parody of the misdirection technique.
- Pons continues investigating on behalf of Lady Heltsham, though without her knowledge. In fact, it is not certain that a crime has even been committed. Pons' investigations reveal his altruistic character. However, conversations between Parker and Pons point towards blackmail as the root problem in this case.

- Pons calls upon his brother Bancroft to assist. Bancroft agrees to have Lady Heltsham's mail opened and her telephone tapped. This is quite a bold move regarding the wife of an influential nobleman, even though it is ostensibly for his benefit.
- Pons and Parker break into an apartment using a skeleton key, then steal some documents. Upon their return to Praed St, the two are guilty of breaking and entering and burglary. The case bears some similarities to the Holmes adventure, *The Master Blackmailer*.