

#6 The Chronicles of Solar Pons (1973)

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The Adventure of the Aluminium Crutch

Crippled artist Sidney Lowell is beaten to death and his crutch destroyed. Mrs. Porteous says someone has broken into several houses on her street, but taken nothing. Her dead husband John was an art fan and used a crutch. Pons sets a trap and lures the killer to Porteous' house to get John's crutch. Lowell had been painting forgeries for an art ring. He'd hidden an original in his crutch, then switched it with Porteous' before he was killed. Adam Forsyth shows up for the crutch and is arrested by Jamison.

The Adventure of the Benin Bronze

Miriam Morley's uncle Randall Creighton receives a drawing in the mail and hears a frog call used by a secret society from Benin, Africa. Creighton was part of an expedition that cleaned out the cannibalistic city. Morley's husband Aaron goes missing. He is found, hacked into pieces on the grounds. A bronze head, brought back from Benin by Creighton, is found with the body. Pons determines that Morley was in debt and wanted Creighton's inheritance. He couldn't wait and lured Creighton out to kill him, to be blamed on a Savage avenging Benin city. Creighton defended himself and killed Morley. Pons does not tell Inspector Danbury but leaves him to solve it with the facts presented.

The Adventure of the Bishop's Companion

Mrs. Parton was billed 10 pounds for a baptism performed by retired Bishop Lamson and refuses to pay. Lamson's companion, George Moulton, recently died suddenly of pneumonia. His gravestone was recently defaced. The vicar tells Pons that Moulton was Lamson's half-brother. Formerly wayward and recently in Spain, he was quiet and spent long hours on his knees at the altar. Pons visits Lamson. That night, Lamson is savagely murdered and something stolen from his dresser. Pons finds jewels in the altar cross, replacing the glass ones Moulton had removed. Lamson had actually died of pneumonia and Moulton traded identities. His swindled partner tracked him down, searched the house, recognized Lamson as really Moulton and killed him, taking a bag of what he thought were rare gems. Killer, Pedro Ramirez, was captured by police.

The Adventure of the Golden Bracelet

Simon Sabata is an archaeologist specializing in Turkey. A woman had brought him to her home and shown him a collection of undiscovered Yortan artifacts. He spent three days sketching and studying them. He is allowed to publish them in three months after not hearing from her. He does and turns out the artifacts were part of a secret trove stolen from the Turkish government. There is no trace of the woman and Sabata is ruined. Rival Nathaniel Corum was framed by Sabata and ruined. He set up Sabata for revenge, discovered by Pons. He gives the Yortan artifacts to Pons who gives them to Sabata and reveals no more. The papers disbelieve Sabata and think he had the stolen items all along. His reputation is ruined.

The Adventure of the Missing Tenants

Italian Consul Eco D'Oro is missing. He's the fourth person to disappear from 27 Orrington Crescent, starting with the builder, Dr. Borstad. Examining a bookshelf, Pons sends gas into two small holes. He discovers Dr. Borstad was living in a secret lab in the building. He gassed people unconscious and experimented on them for his work, *Beyond the Threshold of Pain*. D'Oro was tortured but found alive.

The Adventure of the Orient Express

Parker, at a med conference in Prague, is cabled by Pons to accompany Baron Egon Von Ruber back to London, on the Orient Express, obeying all commands. Von Ruber is an agent receives microfilm from a dying British agent. Von Ruber then kills a deadly German female agent in their compartment. They avoid the Gestapo and outwit German intelligence and Hercule Poirot and are aided by the Saint. Upon arrival, Parker learns that Von Ruber is actually Pons in disguise.

The Adventure of the Red Leech

Agatha Cosby's brother received a red leech, unknown to science, has a stroke and dies. She then receives another leech in the mail. David Cosby left a numbered cipher in his papers. He had been an importer from Indo-China and had a rose garden. Pons breaks the code from Scott's *Kenilworth* and digs up a gem, *The Eye of Buddha*, in the rose garden. Red Leech confronts him. He was Cosby's business partner, but was betrayed. He came back for his share. Agatha gives the gem to him and they are attracted to each other.

The Adventure of the Seven Sisters

Norris Ruthel comes to Pons because his brother Lionel had been found, strangled. Pons determines that like two other murdered men, he was being blackmailed over a matter involving two women. Pons investigates and discovers an oriental assassin is loose, surely working for the nameless Dr. Fu Manchu and the Si-Fan. Pons and Parker infiltrate his headquarters, find several Caucasian women and are captured by the Doctor. He reveals that Ruthel and the two others had run a white slavery ring of seven women. Manchu freed them and others, blackmailing the several ringmasters, killing them when not paid. He will release the women, with compensation. He frees Pons and Parker. Norris Ruthel does not press the matter and Manchu escapes undetected.

The Adventure of the Shaplow Millions

Rosie Shaplow's husband, Arthur, is divorcing her. He has a lawsuit for 7 million pounds going, with a royal co-sponsor. He takes the train to London every day. Pons poses as a financial investor and Shaplow reveals his scheme. Pons arranges to invest, secretly inviting Jamison to the signing. Shaplow is arrested for financial fraud.

The Adventure of the Unique Dickensians

Ebenezer Snawley owns a world-class Charles Dickens collection. A man is walking back and forth only in front of his house selling chestnuts. Pons deduces that it is Micah Auber, a competing collector who Snawley will not let view his books. Pons maneuvers Snawley into inviting the as yet unnamed man to Christmas dinner. Auber tells Pons Snawley's rarest book was stolen from Auber. At the end of the dinner, Pons shows that the book is a forgery and the two men have something in common. The forger, Dennis Golders, now works for the government.

