

A painting of a city street at night. The scene is dominated by a row of ornate, blue-painted street lamps with multiple glowing yellow globes. In the foreground, a man in a dark top hat and a woman in a dark dress are leaning over a stone railing, looking down at something in the woman's hands. The background shows a cityscape with a tall, dark tower and other buildings under a dark blue sky. The overall mood is quiet and atmospheric.

*The
Radjah's
Diamond*

R. L. Stevenson

CHAPTER ONE

Lady Vandeleur's Hatbox

Harry Hartley was a kind, shy young man. Until his sixteenth birthday, he received the education most English gentlemen get. Harry did not like studying very much, so he was allowed to finish his education before most young men do. However, Harry loved music and he could sing and play the piano well.

These talents, and a bit of luck, helped Harry to find a job when his parents died just two years after he finished school. That was how Harry Hartley began a new life as private secretary to Major-General Sir Thomas Vandeleur.

When he was young, Sir Thomas Vandeleur was a soldier in India. He was poor when he left England, but he made a good career for himself working for the Rajah of Kashgar. When Sir Thomas returned to England, he had with him one of the largest diamonds in the world. This was known as the Rajah's Diamond. The Rajah of Kashgar gave this wonderful diamond to Sir Thomas to thank him for something he did for the Rajah.

Nobody knew exactly what Sir Thomas did to get the famous diamond, but the diamond made him one of the richest and most important men in England. In his new life he was always invited to exclusive parties. Soon he was married to one of the richest and most beautiful women in England.

But for Harry life was not so pleasant in the Vandeleur household. Sir Thomas was a very difficult man to live with and Harry did not really like working for him. Sir Thomas was often angry and shouted at Harry. But Sir Thomas's wife, Lady Vandeleur, liked Harry very much and treated him like a son. Harry liked Lady Vandeleur too, and he was happy to do different jobs for her. Most days she gave Harry some money and sent him to different expensive shops to buy her hats or other things she wanted.

Early one morning Harry was in the living room, and he could hear the conversation Lady Vandeleur was having with her brother Charlie Pendragon. Charlie was a lazy young man. 'It must happen today - or never!' said Lady Vandeleur to her brother.

Oh, Clara, he replied, 'I know it must happen today, but it is such a bad thing to do.'

'Don't be silly, Charlie!' said Lady Vandeleur. 'Remember what I always

say: The family before all... and Clara before the family!'

'Yes, dear sister, you're so clever!' said Charlie. 'I must go now, I don't want him to find me here.'

Charlie left quickly by the back stairs.

'Harry,' said Lady Vandeleur, turning to look at him, 'I have an important errand for you this morning. It's a secret and no one must know about it. Sir Thomas may get very upset.'

Lady Vandeleur continued: 'I want you to take my hatbox to an address on the other side of London and give it to a man I know there. Please remember to get a receipt for it. Do you understand?'

Harry started repeating her instructions, but just then Sir Thomas came into the room, his face red with anger.

'Look at this bill, madam!' he cried. 'I know you married me for my money... but I don't want you to spend all of it!'

'Mr Hartley,' said Lady Vandeleur, 'please go on your errand.'

'Wait!' said Sir Thomas, looking at Harry. Then he turned to Lady Vandeleur and said, 'What is this errand? I don't trust him or you. After all, what does he do to earn his money? It's a mystery to everyone.'

'I thought you had something to tell me privately,' said Lady Vandeleur.

'Don't try to change the subject,' insisted Sir Thomas. 'You spoke about an errand.'

'I don't want our servants to listen to our arguments. Mr Hartley, you may go.'

Harry quickly left the room, and as he ran upstairs to get the hatbox he could hear Sir Thomas's loud, angry voice and Lady Vandeleur's cold replies. Harry often went on these secret errands for Lady Vandeleur. He knew Lady Vandeleur's spending was a problem and he often went around London paying small amounts of money to different people for her. But Harry was always loyal to his lady. Besides, he disliked Sir Thomas and he understood Lady Vandeleur's love for expensive things.

It was a hot day and Harry decided to walk through Kensington Gardens to stay in the open. Harry walked near the magnificent Kensington Palace and was almost through the gardens when Sir Thomas suddenly appeared in front of him.

'Where are you going?' demanded Sir Thomas.

'I'm just taking a little walk in the park on this lovely day,' replied Harry, lying to his employer.

'With that thing?' said Sir Thomas pointing at Lady Vandeleur's hatbox. 'You're lying, and you know it! Where did my wife tell you to go?' cried Sir Thomas.

Sir Thomas started to raise his walking stick to hit Harry, but suddenly Charlie Pendragon appeared. 'Sir Thomas! You can't treat Mr Hartley like this!'

No one can tell me what to do!' said Sir Thomas, raising his walking stick and trying to hit Charlie. A moment later they were fighting and a crowd of people was looking at them.

'Run, Harry, Run!' cried Charlie, as he continued fighting.

Harry ran away as fast as he could, thinking all the time: 'Why was Sir Thomas so curious about what was in the hatbox? What doesn't Lady Vandeleur want her husband to know? Is she doing something dishonest? Why were they arguing?' But Harry stopped thinking when he suddenly realised that he was lost.

He was now in a very narrow street. It had high garden walls on both sides. Everything was still and silent. As Harry hurried along the street he wondered where he was. This part of London was completely new to him. While he was wondering where he was, someone shouted his name. He turned around and saw Charlie Pendragon coming quickly after him: he looked angry. Harry knew that Charlie helped him earlier, but by now Harry was so frightened that he ran. He knew that he had to hide. He ran around a corner, climbed over a garden wall and fell over into a garden with a soft 'thump!'

Harry was not hurt, but he lay on the soft, wet ground for a few seconds and thought, 'What am I going to do now?'

But he had no time to think any more. A large man was looking down at him. He picked Harry up easily and stood in front of him.

'Who are you?' demanded the man angrily. 'And why did you come into my garden in this way?'

Harry was too frightened to speak. So the man went on, 'Speak up, young man, or I'll take you to the nearest police station. Just look what you have done to my flowers.'

But as the man looked at the ground his eyes opened wide and he said, 'What's all this?'

Harry looked where the man was looking. The hatbox was open and, all over the ground around them, between their feet and under the roses, were diamonds. There were diamond rings, diamond earrings, a magnificent tiara made of diamonds, and dozens of diamonds shining in the sun.

CHAPTER TWO

A Surprise in the Garden

Harry could not think of anything to say. All he could do was look at the diamonds. The man was silent for a long time, too, before he finally spoke.

'Now I understand. You stole these and ran away. But don't worry, I see there are enough for two here.'

He went down on his knees and started to quickly pick up the diamonds and put them back in the hatbox.

'Let's go inside where no one can see us,' said the man, getting up.

The two men walked across the garden. Harry was so afraid he still could not speak. He understood that he was in big trouble.

The idea that Lady Vandeleur was doing something dishonest made Harry sad. He thought, 'Now I understand why Sir Thomas shouted at his wife before I left the house. She's spending too much money. She probably wanted to sell her diamonds to pay her bills.'

Just as Harry and the man were about to go into the man's house, a young man came into the garden. By the way he was dressed, Harry could see he was either a priest or studying to become a priest.

The older man touched Harry's arm and whispered, 'Don't say a word.'

Then he said, 'Hello, Mr Rolles, this is a young friend of mine who came to see my beautiful roses.'

'How do you do? Oh, but haven't we met before?' asked Mr Rolles. 'Aren't you Mr Hartley?'

The man did not give Harry time to answer. He quickly pushed Harry inside the house and said, 'I'm sorry, Mr Rolles, but my friend can't stay long; we really must go now.'

So Harry and the man went inside and left Mr Rolles outside in the garden.

The man immediately closed the curtains and then he sat down at the table. He divided Lady Vandeleur's diamonds into two unequal piles. He gave the smaller one to Harry.

'Now leave and don't ever come here again!' he said angrily.

Harry did not know what to do, but he knew he could not fight this man. The man then pushed him into the street and he fell to the ground. The diamonds in his pocket were now all over the road. As he lay there a man in dark clothes appeared and quickly picked up most of the diamonds and ran off. Now what could he say to Lady Vandeleur?

When Harry got back to the Vandeleur house he found Sir Thomas, Lady Vandeleur and Charlie Pendragon waiting for him. Obviously Sir Thomas now knew everything about his wife's plans to sell the diamonds. Harry gave Sir Thomas the few diamonds he still had, but Sir Thomas was so angry, both with his wife and Harry, that he didn't believe the story of the man in the garden.

Finally, when he was a bit calmer he said, 'And now, Mr Hartley, I'm going to take you straight to the police station. You can tell them everything.'

Harry knew he had no choice but to go with Sir Thomas. When they got there, Harry told his story to an inspector.

The inspector listened carefully and after Harry stopped talking said, 'I'll take you back to that man's house again. If what you say is true, we must find this man and get the diamonds back immediately.'

But while Harry and the inspector were walking back to the man's house, Mr Rolles was still in the garden, thinking.

After meeting his landlord's friend, Mr Rolles was certain that it was Sir Thomas Vandeleur's private secretary, Harry Hartley. This made him curious about why Harry was there. He could not believe that Harry really was a friend of his dishonest landlord, Mr Raeburn.

So Mr Rolles decided to look around the garden. He noticed some damaged roses near the garden wall and was curious to find out why. This was very strange because Mr Raeburn loved his roses. Near them he saw a piece of material and recognised it as the same material as that of Harry's trousers. Now he knew how Harry got into the garden and how the roses were damaged.

'Well, well, this is becoming quite interesting,' thought Mr Rolles.

Just then, he noticed something buried under the roses. He quickly dug it out with his foot. It was a leather jewellery box. Clearly, his landlord and Harry did not know about it.

Mr Rolles turned the box in his hands. He then opened it and was amazed to see what was inside. On a piece of soft, green velvet was the largest diamond

Mr Rolles ever saw. He knew very little about diamonds, but he knew at once that this was very probably the most precious diamond in the world.

CHAPTER THREE

The Prince and the Diamond Hunter

The more Mr Rolles looked at the Rajah's Diamond, the more he was attracted to it. It was as large as a duck's egg! Mr Rolles next did something very unusual for his character. He quickly looked around the garden to see if anyone was there. When he saw that no one was there, he quickly put the box with the diamond inside his pocket. Then he quietly left the garden and took it back to his room. Now Mr Rolles was a thief!

Mr Rolles still needed to talk to his landlord so he returned to the garden. A few minutes later the police inspector arrived with Harry Hartley. Terrified, Mr Raeburn immediately gave back all the diamonds he had. As for Mr Rolles, he told the police what he knew, and added, 'I suppose your investigation is finished now.'

'Oh no! We're still missing some other jewels. There's a magnificent tiara and also the most valuable piece, the Rajah's Diamond,' answered the inspector.

'I suppose you'll find it soon. It must be very difficult to sell such a famous diamond,' replied Mr Rolles nervously.

'Not really; the thief can cut the diamond into smaller pieces. Then he can sell them separately,' said the inspector.

After everyone left, Mr Rolles returned to his room. He was happy that now he knew how to sell the diamond. There was only one problem: he did not know how to cut diamonds. He looked in all his books, which had no useful advice at all, but then he remembered an old friend in Edinburgh.

'Of course! Why didn't I think of it before? My friend's a jeweller - he can teach me how to cut diamonds,' thought Mr Rolles.

He decided he could not wait so he decided to take the night train to Edinburgh the next day. The following afternoon, he left his bags at the railway station because his train was not leaving until the evening. He had time to have dinner at his club first.

He met a friend of his when he arrived at the club.

'You're lucky to be here tonight. Prince Florizel of Bohemia and John Vandeleur are having dinner here,' said his friend.

'I know Sir Thomas Vandeleur, but I have never met his brother,' Mr Rolles replied.

'Well, John Vandeleur is a great adventurer. He travels around the world looking for diamonds. He knows all about them,' said his friend.

When he heard this, Mr Rolles suddenly became very interested in the two men.

'You must try to listen to their conversation. I'm sure it's going to be very interesting,' added his friend.

'But how will I know who they are?' asked Mr Rolles.

'Oh, you can't miss them! Prince Florizel is the finest gentleman in Europe. John Vandeleur is about seventy, with long, white hair and a scar across his face,' answered his friend.

Mr Rolles hurried to the dining room. It was not difficult to find the Prince and John Vandeleur. The two of them sat at a table together, and were talking intently. There was no one at the table nearest to theirs.

'Good! This is my big chance!' thought Mr Rolles as he sat down at the table. He tried to listen to what the two men were saying.

'Did you hear that someone stole the Rajah's Diamond from my brother Thomas?' asked John Vandeleur.

'Yes, I heard all about it. I think that diamond should be at the bottom of the sea,' replied Prince Florizel. 'It's dangerous. It makes people behave in strange ways.'

'As a diamond hunter, and a Vandeleur, I can't agree with you,' said John Vandeleur. He seemed to be a bit angry.

'You may not agree with me, but a diamond worth so much money can have great power. It can make people do very strange things,' said Prince Florizel.

'That's right. I'll do anything to find the Rajah's Diamond. I'm sure I will one day because I'm the best diamond hunter in the world!' cried John Vandeleur fiercely.

When he heard these words, Mr Rolles suddenly felt very frightened.

'Oh, what if he finds out I have the Rajah's Diamond?' thought Mr Rolles.

Then he looked at his watch.

'I must leave now or I'll miss my train!' he thought.

A short time later, Mr Rolles got on his train. He felt happy when the conductor said, 'You're lucky! Tonight there is only one other gentleman sharing your carriage.'

But Mr Rolles was not happy for very long. He took a seat in his compartment. A man smoking a cigar was standing in the corridor. As the man turned around, Mr Rolles's heart jumped! He had a scar across his face. Mr Rolles was filled with fear: the other gentleman was John Vandeleur!

CHAPTER FOUR

Partners in Crime

Mr Rolles was terrified because John Vandeleur was in the same carriage. He became even more afraid after he saw how the carriage was divided.

There were three compartments in the carriage. Each compartment was separated by only a sliding door. There were no locks on the doors, so John Vandeleur could easily get into Mr Rolles's compartment.

'I'm sure he's going to find out I have the Rajah's Diamond,' thought Mr Rolles.

Mr Rolles put the diamond in the inside pocket of his jacket, and then put on his coat. He was determined not to go to sleep and sat listening for any noise coming from John Vandeleur's compartment.

A few hours passed. The train was almost halfway to Edinburgh when Mr Rolles started to feel sleepy. He tried to fight sleep, but it was very difficult. His last thought before finally closing his eyes was of his terrifying neighbour.

After some time, Mr Rolles opened his eyes. Everything was dark, except for a small light. The train was travelling very fast. Now fully awake, Mr Rolles suddenly sat up. He was very afraid because he had a bad dream. He felt under his clothes to make sure the diamond was still there. It was.

Now Mr Rolles felt a little better. But he could not fall asleep again. His hat was pulled over his eyes. He stared at the sliding door. Everything was quiet, except for the noise of the train.

Suddenly, he noticed the door moving a little, then a little more. Finally, it moved enough for him to see John Vandeleur's head. He felt that John Vandeleur was looking at him. He kept very still. After some time, John Vandeleur moved his head back. Then he closed the door.

Mr Rolles did not know why, but he thought John Vandeleur was afraid of him.

'Maybe he just came to see if I'm asleep,' thought Mr Rolles.

This made him feel brave enough to go and open the door himself. He got up and slowly made his way to the sliding door separating his and John Vandeleur's compartment. When he got there, he opened the door just enough to

see what John Vandeleur was doing. He was shocked by what he saw! John Vandeleur had a knife in his hand!

'He's using it to cut the sleeve of his coat! But why?' thought Mr Rolles.

He soon saw the reason. There were diamonds in the sleeve of his coat, and John Vandeleur was taking them out and letting them drop into a hatbox on the floor. After the diamonds, John Vandeleur took from the sleeve a magnificent tiara - Lady Vandeleur's tiara. It was exactly as the police inspector described it.

'So, John Vandeleur is a diamond thief too!' thought Mr Rolles. This made him feel brave.

Without thinking, he opened the door completely, and said, 'I take a great interest in diamonds. I see you do as well. I have something here that might interest you.'

John Vandeleur was very surprised and angry.

Mr Rolles quietly took the diamond box out. He opened it and showed Mr Vandeleur the Rajah's Diamond. John Vandeleur could do nothing but stare at it in shock.

'I see we have diamonds from the same collection,' said Mr Rolles.

'I don't understand. Aren't you a priest?' asked John Vandeleur.

'I'm a student of theology, but don't judge me so quickly. I'll tell you how I found the diamond. You'll understand why I did what I did,' answered Mr Rolles.

Then he told John Vandeleur about his visit to his landlord's garden and how he met Harry Hartley. Mr Rolles ended his story with these words, 'When I saw Lady Vandeleur's tiara, I knew that we see the world in the same way. I showed you the diamond because I hope you'll help me. Of course, you may have half of what I make.'

John Vandeleur didn't think twice about his answer. He said: 'You're certainly a very brave man, Mr Rolles. You're also better at crime than you think. I can see this is the right job for you. Of course I'll help you sell the Rajah's Diamond! We must go to Paris together. But first, I just have to do something in Edinburgh for my brother. Then we can go to Paris. Before the end of the month we'll be rich, Mr Rolles!'

That was how the two men agreed to work together to sell the diamond. But to find out what happened to the Rajah's Diamond, you must first read the

story of a young man named Francis Scrymgeour.

CHAPTER FIVE

A Mysterious Benefactor

Francis Scrymgeour worked in a bank in the centre of Edinburgh. He was twenty-five and lived with his father. His mother died when Francis was a young child. Francis did not come from a rich family, but he was lucky to have a very sensible father. Francis's father made sure his son received an excellent education.

Francis had a very normal life. He liked his job and he was very affectionate to his father. Nothing extraordinary ever happened to him, but he was happy. So Francis was very surprised when he received a letter from a lawyer in Edinburgh.

Francis was curious to find out why the lawyer was writing to him. So he went to the lawyer's office immediately. There he discovered that he had a mysterious benefactor. His benefactor wanted to give him a lot of money: five hundred pounds a year.

To receive the money, Francis had to do just two things. The first thing he had to do was go to a play at the theatre in Paris the following Sunday. The other was that he marry someone his benefactor chose for him. Francis was very confused!

'But I don't understand. It's all so strange,' said Francis. He was quiet for a moment; then he added, 'Why does he want to choose my wife? What importance is it to him?'

'Believe me, your future wife will be very important to him,' answered the lawyer.

He felt sorry for Francis because he saw how confused the young man was. This news was obviously shocking. Both men were silent for a few seconds. Finally Francis said, 'I'll accept my benefactor's offer. But only if you tell me who he is.'

'I can't tell you his name. But I can tell you what he has to do with you,' answered the lawyer. 'Your benefactor is your real father,' said the lawyer quietly.

Francis did not know what to say. It was all so confusing. 'Father isn't my real father,' he thought over and over again. The lawyer gave Francis his first

cheque from his real father and he left the office. Francis left for Paris the next day. He stayed in a small hotel and, to start a new life, he bought fine new clothes and began taking French lessons. On Saturday afternoon he went to the theatre to pick up the ticket for Sunday's play.

A person at the ticket office gave Francis his ticket. Then he said, 'That's strange. A man just gave me this ticket a minute ago.'

'What did he look like?' asked Francis.

'He was about 70 years old, I think, with long white hair. He has a scar across his face,' replied the clerk.

Francis went away immediately and ran into the middle of the street. He looked around in all directions and then he saw the person he was looking for. He saw two men sitting on a bench. They were talking very seriously. The younger one seemed to be a priest, but the other was an old man with long white hair.

Francis walked towards them. He saw the old man had a scar across his face. His heart started to beat fast. He sat on a bench behind the two men as he did not want them to see him.

He tried to listen to what the two men were saying.

'Your suspicions are starting to make me angry,' said the older man.

'But I'm sure you want to keep the diamond for yourself.'

'That's enough! We will meet on Tuesday at seven o'clock, Mr Rolles, not an hour sooner,' cried the old man angrily.

The old man got up and hurried down the street. Francis followed him quietly, but quickly.

'So this is probably my benefactor and real father!' thought Francis, 'But why is he so angry with that young man? And what was that business about a diamond?' Francis felt very confused.

The old man's house was in Rue Lepic and had a beautiful view of Paris. He went into this large house, which had green shutters, and Francis was left outside alone.

'What am I going to do now? I need to find a room near here,' thought Francis. Luckily, he saw a sign outside a tall house next to the one with the green shutters. The sign said, 'Rooms Available'. Francis went inside and asked for a

room. He was lucky to get one that had a view of the old man's garden.

'That man may be my real father. But I'm going to find out what he and that young theology student are doing. I think there's something dishonest going on with that diamond,' thought Francis.

He got up and looked out of the window into the old man's garden which had a tall chestnut tree. It was evening now and the sky was getting dark. Nothing moved. Francis looked through the leaves of the chestnut tree and saw that the old man was sitting in the garden. A young woman's voice broke the silence. It came from inside the house.

'In a moment,' the old man answered.

A few minutes later, he disappeared into the house for the night.

CHAPTER SIX

A Shocking Night

Early the next morning, Francis looked out the window of his room. A young lady was walking through the garden. Francis thought she was very beautiful. He also thought that she looked very kind.

'She may be my sister. But if she's not, maybe she'll be my wife one day,' thought Francis.

On his way out of his room, Francis saw a porter. He stopped him and asked, 'Who lives in that big house with green shutters next door?'

'A rich English gentleman called John Vandeleur,' replied the porter.

'Is the lovely young lady his daughter?' asked Francis.

'Yes. That's Miss Vandeleur. Her father's very rich, but she does all the work because there are no servants,' answered the porter.

For the rest of the day, Francis did not see John Vandeleur or his daughter. He was very excited because it was finally Sunday.

'I have to go to the theatre tonight. Who knows what will happen?' thought Francis.

That night at the theatre Francis went to the seat that his ticket showed. He looked over at the box to his right. John Vandeleur and his daughter were there. Francis felt his cheeks turn red.

'What are they saying to each other?' he wondered.

He stared at the stage for a while, he did not want the Vandeleurs to see him looking at them. But when he went to the box to his right at the end, the Vandeleurs were no longer there.

After the play Francis walked back to his room. He felt even more confused than before.

Nothing else happened the next day, or the next, which was Tuesday. Suddenly, Francis thought of something.

'Now I remember! The young man that Vandeleur was talking to is coming to his house at seven o'clock,' thought Francis.

A few minutes before seven, Francis looked out of his window. A table was set for dinner in the garden. At exactly seven o'clock, the young man who seemed a priest arrived. John Vandeleur showed him into the garden.

Mr Rolles spoke very little and looked very serious. John Vandeleur, instead, often laughed loudly. After the two men finished their dinner, Miss Vandeleur brought the coffee tray.

John Vandeleur stood up quickly and said, 'And now, let me serve you the coffee.'

He went to the small table near the dinner table. He poured the coffee into two cups. Then he poured another liquid into the smaller cup. He did this so quickly that Francis was not sure he really saw him do it. But then Francis saw John Vandeleur give Mr Rolles the smaller cup.

'Maybe that didn't happen and I really didn't see what I think I saw,' thought Francis.

Suddenly, Francis heard a loud 'thump!' Mr Rolles was lying on the grass.

'Oh Father, what did you do? Is he dead?' cried Miss Vandeleur.

'Silence! Mr Rolles is not dead. He only fainted. Help me take him inside,' said John Vandeleur.

The two took Mr Rolles by the arms and legs and went into the house.

'I think they're in trouble. I must do something quickly,' thought Francis.

Without thinking he climbed out of his window and down the big tree into John Vandeleur's garden. He did not knock on the door, but ran straight into the house. He saw Mr Vandeleur standing over Mr Rolles's body. Mr Vandeleur then took something out of Mr Rolles's pocket. He quickly gave it to his daughter.

Suddenly Francis cried, 'Father, let me help you. I won't ask any questions.'

'Father? What is this? Who are you?' cried John Vandeleur surprised by Francis's appearance.

Then Mr Vandeleur realised who he was, and laughed, 'Oh, I see you're Scrymgeour! I'm not your father: you're my brother's illegitimate son. You've entered my private residence by force. And what's more, this is a bad moment because my guest has fainted!' John Vandeleur was angry with Francis. 'My brother wanted you to marry my daughter. He made you come here to Paris and go to the theatre on Sunday night. This was so my daughter could see you for the

first time. Well, she saw you and she didn't like what she saw. Now go, and don't ever come back here again!' he ordered.

Francis quietly followed Miss Vandeleur to the door. He felt sad. Miss Vandeleur opened the door and said, 'What my father said to you isn't true. I told him I wanted to meet you again before deciding. I'm very sorry he was so horrible to you.'

'I'd like to see you again,' said Francis. 'Please give me something so that I can remember you.'

She smiled and took something from her pocket. Then she whispered, 'Please take this keepsake. Promise not to look at it until you're safe. Now, go quickly!'

Francis started running down the road when he heard a terrible cry from the Vandeleur house - it was Mr Rolles. Francis ran for his life and finally sat down at the Cafe Americain. Then he remembered what was in his pocket and took it out. It was a leather jewellery box.

'I saw this before at the house. It's what Mr Vandeleur took out of Mr Rolles's pocket!' Francis thought suddenly.

He opened the box and got the shock of his life. In the box on the green velvet there was the largest and most beautiful diamond Francis ever saw.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A Prince to the Rescue

Francis continued staring at the diamond. He was still in shock a few minutes later when he felt a hand on his shoulder. He looked up and saw an elegantly dressed man standing next to his table.

The stranger sat down next to him and whispered in his ear, 'Close the box and put it back into your pocket. Try to stop looking so surprised and make everyone think that you know me. I fear you must be an amateur.'

Francis looked at the man and saw that he was smiling. He had a friendly face. 'Please, tell me who you are and what this means,' said Francis.

'Very well, but first you must tell me who you are and what you are doing with the Rajah's Diamond,' answered the man.

'The Rajah's Diamond?' repeated Francis.

'Yes, that's what you were holding. I know because I saw it at Sir Thomas Vandeleur's house many times,' said the man.

Francis was silent for a moment. He could not believe the famous Rajah's Diamond was in his pocket. He also could not believe that this amazing diamond belonged to his real father. Finally something about the man's friendly face made Francis believe he was an honest man. He decided to tell the man the whole story of how he got the diamond. After he finished, the man said, 'Now I know all about you, but you don't even know who I am yet!' He called a waiter to their table.

'Will you be so kind as to tell this young man my name, please?' the man asked.

'Certainly, sir,' said the waiter. Turning to Francis he said, 'You have the honour of sharing the same table with His Highness Prince Florizel of Bohemia.'

'And now that you know who I am, I think you can trust me with the diamond,' said the prince smiling.

Without saying a word, Francis took the diamond out of his pocket again and gave it to the prince.

'You did the right thing, Francis. I see that you are a good person. You'll

see that I can help you get out of this difficult situation. Now come with me,' said the prince.

The two men left the cafe and the prince showed Francis to his carriage. Then the prince said, 'My driver will take you to my mansion just outside Paris. There you can wait for my return. Don't worry, I'll take care of everything. You'll marry Miss Vandeleur, at last!'

As his carriage drove away, the prince made his way to John Vandeleur's house. As he knocked on the door, the Prince thought, 'I'm going to teach John Vandeleur a lesson he'll never forget!'

John Vandeleur himself opened the door. He looked very angry, but tried not to show it.

'What a pleasure it is to see Your Highness! Please come in,' said John Vandeleur.

He showed the prince into the living room. Miss Vandeleur was sitting on a sofa. She looked very sad. Mr Rolles was sitting on another sofa and seemed to be very confused.

The prince turned to John Vandeleur and said, 'I'm here on business. You will do as I say or things will be worse for you. At the earliest date your daughter will marry Francis Vandeleur, your brother's son and my friend. And you will give him a dowry of ten thousand pounds.'

'Believe me, I didn't know the young man was your friend. I'm sorry if I offended him,' answered John Vandeleur.

The prince knew John Vandeleur was not sorry at all. All he was interested in was his brother's diamond.

'Now you know he's my friend and you will do as I say. I'm going to go now. Mr Rolles, you're coming with me,' said the Prince.

A moment later, John Vandeleur left the house too. He looked very angry as he almost ran down the street towards the police station.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A River Saves the Day!

Prince Florizel and Mr Rolles were almost at Mr Rolles's hotel.

'I'm ruined,' cried Mr Rolles, 'please help me. I'm no good as a priest, and even worse as a thief!'

'Try to forget what happened. Go to Australia and buy a farm,' said the prince.

'Oh, but how do I know that diamond isn't ruining someone else?' cried Mr Rolles.

'To show you that I believe you really are sorry, I'm going to tell you a secret. I have the Rajah's Diamond. I'm going to make sure it doesn't get anyone into trouble ever again!' said Prince Florizel.

'Oh, thank you for believing me!' said Mr Rolles.

'Well, here we are at your hotel. Go inside and forget all your troubles. Goodbye, and good luck in Australia,' said the prince.

Prince Florizel turned around and started walking home. He was not sure about what he wanted to do with the diamond. Give it back to its owner, Sir Thomas Vandeleur? But Sir Thomas did not deserve it. Perhaps the only way was to get rid of the Rajah's Diamond forever?

'That diamond will always get its owner into trouble,' thought the prince.

He took the case out of his pocket and opened it. There was the brilliant, perfect diamond.

'If I look at it any longer, I'll want to keep it,' thought the prince. But he still was not sure about what to do. He approached his home; he always felt happier when he got nearer. He lived in an elegant mansion along the River Seine, with tall chimneys and a beautiful garden. His was the only home in Paris that had a stork on its roof, and this attracted many people.

Suddenly, as he was entering his home, a man came up to him.

'Do I have the honour of speaking to Prince Florizel of Bohemia?' asked the man.

'Yes, but what do you want at this late hour?' asked the prince.

'I'm a detective, Your Highness. I'm here to ask you to come with me to the police station.'

'But what for?' asked the prince, surprised, 'I haven't done anything wrong.'

'John Vandeleur has accused you of stealing the Rajah's Diamond, Your Highness,' answered the detective.

'I see. I can tell you that I haven't stolen the diamond. Let me explain. Let's walk to the police station together,' said the prince, 'I'm going to tell you the story of how Sir Thomas Vandeleur came to own the famous Rajah's Diamond.'

'I'm very curious to hear it,' answered the detective.

'Many years ago,' began Prince Florizel, 'Sir Thomas Vandeleur was a soldier in India. He was not a very good soldier and he wasn't very popular. But Sir Thomas was very lucky. One day he met the Rajah of Kashgar who invited him to his palace. At the palace Sir Thomas saw the largest, most beautiful diamond he ever saw. He decided that he must have it. So he decided to stay in India and serve the Rajah, who was not an honest man. For three years, Sir Thomas did many bad things for the Rajah. He even betrayed his own soldiers in danger. Because of him, thousands of men were killed. In the end, Sir Thomas made the Rajah a very large fortune. To thank him, the Rajah finally gave him the diamond he wanted so badly...'

Prince Florizel continued his story. After a long walk, the detective found out all about how Sir Thomas Vandeleur, Mr Rolles, and Francis Scrymgeour each came to own the Rajah's Diamond.

'So you see, detective, you must agree with me. The Rajah's Diamond has got everyone who has touched it into great trouble. That diamond may be extremely beautiful, but it has an evil power over people. It makes them greedy,' said the prince.

The detective knew the prince was right.

'The only people the diamond didn't make greedy are Francis and I,' added the prince, 'I have the Rajah's Diamond here in my pocket now. God forgive me if I am doing something wrong. But that diamond's evil power must end tonight.'

With these words, the prince took the diamond out of his pocket. He looked at it one more time as it shone in the moonlight. Then suddenly without saying anything, he threw it into the Seine. It sparkled in the sky before falling into the river. Both men stared at the water in silence. The diamond was now

gone.

'And now, let's go to the station at once. I'm sure you won't be put in prison once the chief of police hears this story,' said the detective.

Not long after this eventful night, Francis and Miss Vandeleur were married. The prince was happy to be Francis's best man. The young couple started their life together and nobody ever talked about the Rajah's Diamond again.

But there were two people who continued to look for the diamond. John and Thomas Vandeleur got news of what happened that night when the detective came to arrest Prince Florizel. They often took a boat out on the Seine to look for the diamond. But, because they had wrong information about the bridge where Prince Florizel was standing when he threw it in the Seine, they spent all their time looking in the wrong part of the river. People taking a walk along the river often stopped to watch men diving from their boat. They didn't know why the Vandeleurs organized this diving operation, but it was entertaining to watch.

The Rajah's Diamond stayed at the bottom of the river, where Prince Florizel threw it and where nobody could see it shining... and where it could do no harm to anybody any more.

- THE END -

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