

Doughty Francis Worcester

**The Bradys After a Chinese
Princess: or, The Yellow Fiends
of 'Frisco**



Francis Doughty

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CHAPTER I

THE MYSTERY THAT CAME OUT OF THE MIST

One foggy night a few years since at something after two o'clock, a good-sized motor boat containing five men might have been seen cruising close in to the water-front line of lower San Francisco.

Three of the occupants were big, husky fellows, who sat idly in the boat looking like men waiting to be called upon to act and prepared for any emergency.

A good-looking young fellow in his twenties was attending to engineer's duty, while astern sat an elderly man of striking appearance and peculiar dress.

He wore a long, blue coat with brass buttons, an old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar, and a big white hat with an unusually broad brim.

Clearly he was the leader of this outfit, whatever their business might be out there on the silent bay in the early morning hours.

He was a man accustomed to command, being none other than the world-famous detective, Old King Brady, chief of the Brady Detective Bureau of Union Square, New York.

And having made this statement, we need scarcely add that the young man in charge of the boat was his partner, Young King Brady, second in skill as a detective only to his great chief.

The detective had been ordered to San Francisco on special duty by the United States Secret Service Bureau.

Information had been received of the intention of certain Chinamen to run in opium on a large scale, dodging the duty due to Uncle Sam.

The information, while definite and reliable, was still vague.

Details were lacking, yet it was known that there was surely going to be something doing in the line during this particular week, and that whatever was done would take place in the neighborhood of the India Basin.

This made the fourth night the Bradys had been on the watch with three local Secret Service men as their aides.

It was discouraging work.

Nothing had happened.

The weak point of the undertaking was the lack of knowledge as to the particular ship or steamer on which the opium was expected to arrive.

Two steamers had arrived from China this week, one regular liner and one tramp.

Three sailing vessels had also come in, all from Chinese ports.

Yet it was by no means certain that the opium would enter the harbor of San Francisco in that way.

It is quite the custom with captains of English tramp steamers, and also with those of sailing vessels, to drop opium overboard in sealed rubber bags while off the Farraleone Islands.

Such bags are picked up by fishing schooners on hand for the purpose, and by them landed as best they can.

A close watch for such operations in this particular instance was being kept by a special revenue cutter outside the Golden Gate.

The Bradys' orders had to do only with the landing.

It was supposed that the people connected with some storage warehouse in this vicinity were and had been for some time standing in with the smugglers.

It was particularly desired by the Government to learn who these people were; to catch them red-handed and make an example of them.

That Chinese capital was back of this crooked enterprise was certain, but there was reason to believe that they were being substantially aided by others who were not of their race.

"If the fog would only lift we might be able to do something," remarked one of the Secret Service men, "but as it is I see little use in remaining here."

"Patience," replied Old King Brady. "We have to do the best we can, my friend. I admit that the fog is a nuisance, but I am not giving up yet by any means. Harry, work in a little nearer. We must be close upon the India Basin by this time."

The order was obeyed by Young King Brady.

After a few moments the wharf line became visible, the fog lifting a bit.

Then suddenly came a break.

"The basin," said the Secret Service man.

"I think not," replied Old King Brady. "I think it is only the Islais Creek Channel. Stop the boat, Harry. We will lie off here for a few minutes. Perhaps we are banking too much on these hop smugglers running into the basin. It may be one of the warehouses on the channel here after all."

Harry stopped the launch accordingly.

The ebb tide took them back and the fog closed in on the Islais Channel.

The boat ran against a wharf and the movement was stopped.

"Shall I pull up, governor?" inquired Young King Brady.

"No. We will rest as we are," said the old detective. "Quiet, now. Let us listen. I shall not remain long idle here."

"It isn't the least use," growled the Secret Service man. "There won't be nothing doing to-night."

Old King Brady made no reply.

This man was a chronic kicker. He had been at it right along.

But for the fact that he was also known to be a good fighter, Old King Brady would have dropped him.

Silence and fog!

Such was the situation now.

For fully twenty minutes they remained thus, and the old detective was just about to order a move on to the India Basin when voices were heard at no great distance, speaking in some foreign tongue.

"At last!" breathed Old King Brady. "I told you there would be something doing to-night, boss. Is that Chinese they are talking, Harry?"

"Sounds so."

"Sure it is," added the kicker.

"I'll wake up Alice, then," said the old detective. "This is her job."

We have not mentioned a woman who, wrapped in a heavy shawl, sat half reclining at Old King Brady's feet with her head resting on a corner of the stern seat.

This was the noted female detective, Alice Montgomery, who is a full partner in the Brady Bureau.

The daughter of a missionary, born and brought up in China, Alice, besides several other foreign languages, such as German, French and Italian, both speaks and reads Chinese.

Of course, such an accomplishment was likely to prove invaluable in a situation like this.

Old King Brady now aroused his female partner and explained.

But by this time the voices had ceased.

"Must be that they are in a sailboat," observed the kicker, half aloud.

"Will you kindly keep quiet," breathed the old detective. "This mist is as good as a telephone. I want to do business to-night if I can."

After a moment the voices in the mist were heard again.

Alice listened attentively.

"Chinese?" whispered Harry.

"Yes; hush."

The voices ceased.

Chinese never hold continuous conversation like other people.

They say what they have to say and let it go at that.

This time the voices seemed to come from a greater distance.

"What are they talking about?" the old detective asked.

"They are trying to find the Islais Channel," whispered Alice. "They think they have missed their bearings."

"Therein they are quite mistaken. The Islais Channel is right here. Didn't catch the name of any street or warehouse?"

"No."

"Or person?"

"The name Volckman was mentioned."

"Good! It may prove a valuable clew. Let us wait and listen. To attempt to overhaul them in the open bay would be useless, but once they enter the channel, we have them bottled up."

"I wonder what sort of a craft they are in?" queried Harry.

"It can't be either a rowboat or a launch," replied the old detective, "and it is hard to see how they can get around with a sailboat on a night like this, yet that must be what it is."

"There is a breeze springing up now," observed the kicker.

He had scarcely spoken when the voices were heard close to them.

Evidently the ebb tide was taking the smugglers, if such they were, their way.

They were now speaking loud and rapidly.

"Draw your revolvers, boys, and be ready," breathed Old King Brady. "We are liable to be discovered at any moment."

Alice sat listening.

"They are the smugglers, all right," she presently whispered.

"Sure?" asked Old King Brady.

"Yes. They say – "

"Never mind, Alice, unless it is something important."

Still the voices continued.

The smugglers appeared to be passing the launch in the direction of the channel.

"Listen!" whispered Alice, as they presently ceased. "This is important. One said: 'We must hurry if we expect to save the princess. She can't stand it much longer.'"

"What can that mean?"

"The name of their boat, perhaps."

"Do you think so?"

"Frankly, I don't. It seemed to me as if they were speaking of a person."

"Then they must have a woman with them. Perhaps some Chinese woman they are smuggling in."

Suddenly a loud voice exclaimed in English: "Here's your channel now, you Chinks!"

"Allee light! Allee light! Hully up now," came the reply.

The breeze had increased. The fog was lifting a little. Certain sounds were heard that indicated a sailboat going about.

"Shall I start up?" asked Harry.

"Not yet," was the reply. "Let them get well into the channel, then we will close in on them."

The voices died away; the time to move had come.

"Now," said Old King Brady. Immediately the "chug-chug" of the motor made itself heard.

"Bear right down upon them," ordered the old detective; "a little brisk action will put us on the right side of this outfit, I hope. Alice, you get down in the boat."

Alice, brave girl that she is, protested that she was willing to take her chances with the rest, but Old King Brady sternly repeating the order, it was obeyed.

A few moments of anxious suspense and a large sailboat loomed up out of the mist right ahead of them.

Instantly Old King Brady turned a powerful electric flashlight upon it.

In the boat were several boxes and bales. One box seemed particularly large.

If this was filled with opium, Old King Brady knew that it must be very valuable.

There were three Chinamen in the boat and one white man.

"Lower your sail and surrender!" thundered Old King Brady.

The white man appeared about to obey, but one of the Chinamen interfered.

The other two immediately discharged their revolvers at the launch.

The shots flew harmlessly past them, but it made the old detective vexed to think that he had not been the first to open fire, which he and the others by his command now instantly did.

Whether any one was hit or not it was impossible to tell, but all four men at once sprang overboard and, abandoning their boat, struck out for the south bulkhead of the channel, which was no great distance away.

"We win!" cried the old detective. "No more firing, boys. I had just as soon they would escape."

They pushed on to the abandoned boat.

The mist closed in on them and the swimmers were lost to view.

Making fast to the boat, the kicker sprang aboard and lowered the sail.

"A good haul, Mr. Brady," he exclaimed. "There are thousands of pounds of hop here, but what do you suppose is in this big box?"

"That remains for us to discover," replied Old King Brady. "Is it heavy?"

"Very," replied the kicker, weighting the box.

"Never mind now. Make fast and we will pull around to the Indian Basin. I shall touch nothing until we are at the Government stores."

The kicker obeyed, and was just about to step back into the launch, when Old King Brady, ordering him to remain where he was, he sat down on the big tin box.

Instantly he jumped up again, exclaiming:

"Good heavens! There is some one alive in this box!"

"Ah! The princess!" cried Alice.

"What did you hear?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Some one spoke. There it goes again! It's a Chinaman."

"Or a woman! Alice, do you think you can get aboard the sailboat without tumbling into the bay?"

"Why, certainly," replied Alice, and she stepped aboard the sailboat with the kicker's aid.

"Is any one in the box?" she called.

"Yes. Help! Save me! I am dying in here!" came the answer in Chinese.

Alice instantly repeated the words.

"We must make a landing right here on the bulkhead in front of these warehouses," declared Old King Brady, and he gave Harry orders accordingly.

Loaded down as the sailboat was, it would have been both difficult and dangerous to attempt to open the bulky box on board.

Indeed, in order to get at it properly, a good portion of the contents of the boat would have to be removed in any case.

"Ask her who she is and how she came to be there, Alice," the old detective called; adding:

"I am assuming that it is a woman."

"Yes, it's a woman," replied Alice, and she put the question.

"She says she is the Princess Skeep Hup," Alice called.

"Ask her how she came to be in the box."

But when Alice put the question there came no reply.

"I'm afraid she has fainted!" said Alice, "or, indeed, she may be dead."

"A mystery!" cried Harry. "The mystery that came out of the mist."

CHAPTER II.

ALICE AND THE CHINESE PRINCESS

To make a quick opening of the box containing the Chinese Princess was quite impossible.

Besides the difficulties already explained, there were others.

The box was not nailed.

Examination showed that it was put together with screws, and that the boards were of some hard wood.

Air-holes bored in the sides at regular intervals showed that the imprisoned princess certainly ought to have no difficulty in breathing, and made it seem that her present unconsciousness was probably nothing more than a faint.

The landing at the bulkhead had now been made.

There appeared to be no watchman here – at least no one challenged the Secret Service party.

Behind the bulkhead extended a row of storage warehouses.

The boat had been tied up opposite a break in this row formed by a street extending back towards Amador street, the first of which parallels the Islais Creek Channel on the south.

The Bradys had plenty of rope, and the work of unloading now began.

Harry got into the sailboat along with the kicker and remained there.

Old King Brady, Alice and the other two Secret Service men ascended to the bulkhead.

Such boxes and opium bales as were piled on the larger box were transferred to the launch, and a rope made fast around the box, which was then hauled up, but not without considerable difficulty, and carried in front of the first warehouse of the row, where it was placed on the board platform.

Alice now called again to the imprisoned princess, but received no answer.

"I'll be blest if I see how we are ever going to get this thing open without a screw-driver," grumbled one of the Secret Service men.

"I can supply that want," replied the old detective, who usually has a few tools concealed in some of the many pockets of that wonderful blue coat.

He hastily produced it and went to work.

The screw-driver was not only a small affair, but the blade folded into a slot in the handle.

The joint being loose, it made the tool wobbly.

Old King Brady soon discovered that he had attempted the impossible. He could not start a single screw.

"This is a bad job," he exclaimed. "We shall have to lower the box again. I greatly fear that we are up against a murder case. If the woman was alive, she would surely have revived before this."

"She said she was dying," replied Alice. "It begins to look as if she spoke the truth."

"Get back to the boat," called Harry. "We may as well run around to the India Basin warehouse. We shall be able to open the box there."

"I see no other way," replied Old King Brady, and once again he started to make fast the rope, when suddenly Harry called that he could hear the sound of oars.

"Which way?" demanded the old detective.

"Up the channel. Don't seem to be far off, either."

"Come, boys," said Old King Brady, "we'll sneak along the bulkhead and see who it is. Crouch low, now. If it is the Chinamen prowling about, we may be able to bag them. Alice, you better go aboard the launch."

"I'll stay here and watch the box," replied Alice.

The old detective and the two Secret Service men now crept along the line of the bulkhead with their revolvers drawn.

Alice quickly lost sight of them in the fog, which was now thicker than ever.

"Alice, are you all right up there?" called Harry.

"Of course," she replied. "Why not?"

"I wish you would come down."

"And abandon my imprisoned princess? I won't."

Harry and Alice are lovers, and practically engaged.

Long ago they would have been married if Alice would only consent to give up her work.

But Alice is perfectly fascinated with the life of a detective, so the marriage day is forever being postponed, for Harry insists that Alice shall give up the business before becoming his wife.

But even under their present relations he sometimes tries to force her to yield to his ideas more than she cares for, although he has long ago learned that she is a difficult person to drive.

Harry knew by her tone now that Alice had made up her mind to stay just where she was, so he let the matter drop and was sitting in the launch in silence when suddenly a shot rang out.

It was followed by another, and others still.

Then Old King Brady shouted something in the distance, but Harry could not make out what he said.

"Alice!" he called, "can you hear what the governor is saying?"

There was no answer.

"She don't seem to hear you," observed the kicker.

"Alice!" shouted Harry again.

Still no answer.

"Can she have gone forward to see what that shooting is about?" he exclaimed. "It would be just like her. I'm going up to see."

"I hear somebody running," cried the kicker.

Just then Old King Brady was heard calling out:

"Lay for them, Harry! Chinks in a boat! Coming your way!"

Young King Brady listened, catching the sound of oars.

But it was only for a minute.

"They have either stopped or muffled their oars!" he said when he heard Old King Brady right above him exclaim:

"Good heavens! What's this?"

"Anything the matter with Alice?" cried Harry, and he went up the standing ladder flying.

Old King Brady was peering about in the fog.

The two Secret Service men were just coming up.

"What is it?" cried Harry. "Where's Alice? I have called her several times, but she don't answer."

"Why, I left her right here, and that box with her; both seem to have vanished," Old King Brady answered in a tone which fully betrayed his anxiety.

But it was easy to mistake the exact position in the fog.

A moment's search revealed the puzzling fact that nowhere on the bulkhead Alice and the heavy box containing the imprisoned princess was to be found.

The Bradys and the Secret Service men pushed about everywhere.

One of the first things they did was to turn the corner of the end warehouse and look there along the street.

"She has been captured and carried off. She must have gone this way," Harry exclaimed.

"Or into one of the warehouses," said Old King Brady.

"I'll get up the street. You get along by the warehouses," cried Harry, and he started away on the run.

It was ten minutes before he returned.

"Learned anything?" demanded Old King Brady, anxiously.

"Nothing. I went two blocks. Didn't see a soul; no need to ask you if you had better luck, I suppose?"

"I had none at all. I have tried the different doors, but I can't find any that is open now, whatever the case may have been a few minutes ago."

And such are the circumstances of the most mysterious disappearance Alice has ever made, and she has made many, for, of course, troubles form a part of the life of a detective.

Poor Harry was in despair. Old King Brady exceedingly anxious and also vexed with himself to think that he had not insisted upon Alice going aboard the boat.

"And you heard no noise of any kind?" he asked for the third time.

"Not a sound," replied Harry. "I was sitting quiet in the boat, too."

"When was the last you heard her speak?"

"Just before the firing began. Was it you who fired?"

"We fired back at three Chinamen who fired on us from a boat."

"Sailboat – rowboat?"

"Rowboat. Didn't you hear the sound of oars?"

"Yes, yes! I am so rattled that I hardly know what I'm saying. What on earth shall we do?"

"We have to look after our captured opium, too. You remain here, Harry, and Leggett can stop with you. I'll run the stuff around into the India Basin and make sure of it. Don't you go doing the disappearance act now."

"Same to you, governor. Oh, these Chinks! I wish we might never have another mix-up with them."

Old King Brady made no reply, but hastily descended to the launch, which towed the captured sailboat to a bonded warehouse on the India Basin, where Secret Service men were waiting to receive them.

It was daybreak before he got back to the Islais Creek Channel again.

The fog had vanished with the night, and a hot August wind was blowing the sand about after the usual San Francisco style.

Harry and the Secret Service man were standing on the bulkhead.

"Have you learned anything?" demanded Old King Brady as the launch drew near.

"Not a thing, worse luck," replied Harry. "If ever there was a mystery it is this."

"It is certainly a bad job," replied the old detective, "but such as it is we must make the best of it. Let us wait for the opening up of these warehouses. Information of some sort may come from a quarter we least suspect."

Seven o'clock came, bringing with it the men connected with the warehouses.

Among them was the dock foreman, who demanded the Bradys' business.

He seemed slightly startled when he saw the Secret Service shield.

"Who is Volckman?" demanded the old detective, abruptly.

"I am Volckman," was the reply.

"What's your position here?"

"I am dock foreman."

"Which means that you have charge of the laborers?"

"Yes."

"Who is superintendent of these stores?"

"Mr. Renshaw."

"When is he due here?"

"Eight o'clock."

"Will he remain here right along after that?"

"Yes; all day."

"I want to see Mr. Renshaw. Tell him Old King Brady was speaking to you, and that he will return in about an hour."

The Bradys went away in their launch then, going to breakfast at the Palace Hotel, where they were staying.

The first thing Old King Brady did upon their arrival at the hotel was to call up Secret Service Commissioner Narraway and tell him of their partial success.

He did not mention Alice's disappearance nor the matter of the Chinese princess, leaving these things to be communicated by word of mouth later on when, it was to be hoped, he would understand them better himself.

Breakfast over, the Bradys lost no time in keeping their appointment with Mr. Renshaw, who proved to be a civil, intelligent gentleman.

Old King Brady at once explained the whole situation.

"This certainly seems to be a serious piece of business," said Mr. Renshaw after hearing the old detective through. "I can't understand what brought these Chinamen here or how they came to use Mr. Volckman's name. Is there no possibility of Miss Montgomery being mistaken?"

"I don't think so. Her knowledge of Chinese is excellent."

"And her disappearance a serious matter for you, I realize. I can't imagine that she and this singular box can have been taken into any of our warehouses."

"You have perfect confidence in Volckman?"

"Always have had. Would you like to question him? I will send for him if you wish."

"No; I think not. I certainly do suspect the man of being mixed up in this business, but it will do no good to make him aware of it; still I should like to be given the opportunity to search these warehouses in every part."

"And so you shall. I will go with you myself. If there is any crooked work going on here I want to know it."

The search was made accordingly, but nothing came of it.

"Listen, Mr. Renshaw," said the old detective as they were about to part. "To-day a laboring man will apply for work at this office. He wants to be hired and given a job, which will enable him to watch Volckman."

"I understand," was the reply, "and so it shall be."

And so it was. Secret Service man Leggett, an excellent detective in his way, was the person selected, but three days passed, and at the end of that time he had nothing to report.

Nor had a word been heard of Alice.

This time her disappearance seemed to be a serious matter.

The Bradys exhausted every effort to find her, but in vain.

CHAPTER III

LUNG & LUNG

It is needless to dwell upon the anxiety of the Bradys over the strange vanishing of their accomplished partner.

They were otherwise very seriously inconvenienced.

The Secret Service people, satisfied with the very valuable haul the detectives had made in the line of smuggled opium, now called them off.

The Bradys are not regular Secret Service men.

They have, however, an arrangement with the Government under which their services can be claimed at any time.

The day after Alice's disappearance Old King Brady was notified by Mr. Narraway that the regular force would finish up the matter, inasmuch as he felt satisfied that the heavy loss they had sustained must have bankrupted the smugglers.

Thus under ordinary circumstances the detectives would have made haste to cross the continent and get back to their own business in New York.

As it was, they had no idea of leaving San Francisco yet awhile, of course.

Each day was devoted to the search for Alice.

Even the police took a hand in the game, much as Old King Brady dislikes to have them mix up in his affairs, but as we have said before, it was all in vain.

On the morning of the fourth day before the Bradys had yet left the hotel, a page announced that a Chinaman wished to speak to the old detective, and at the same time he handed in a business card printed in English on one side, and in Chinese on the other.

The English side read thus:

LUNG & LUNG,
General Importers,
1015 Dupont Street,
San Francisco, Cal.
Ah Lung
Gee Lung
Wun Lung.

"The whole Lung family," remarked the old detective, looking at the card. "Show the man up."

It proved to be Ah Lung who came.

He was a very much Americanized proposition, California born and college educated.

In short, both in dress, intelligence and manner he was as perfect a specimen of a Chinese gentleman as the Bradys had ever seen.

Before proceeding further we must pause to explain that while the Bradys through their influence had been able to keep the matter of Alice's disappearance and the boxed-up princess off the police blotter, and so out of the papers, it was an open secret among the force.

Consequently it was no surprise to the detectives to have this Chinaman at once allude to it.

"Mr. Brady," he began, "I want you if you will to take up an important matter for our firm, which you will find upon investigation, if you are not already aware of it, stands high in San Francisco commercial circles."

Old King Brady had heard of the firm of Lung & Lung, and said so. He doubted, however, if he cared to take up a case for them.

"It is work you are already engaged in," replied Ah Lung quickly. "It concerns the Chinese princess, Skeep Hup, who disappeared along with your Miss Montgomery the other day."

"What do you know about that?" demanded Old King Brady, "and who told you?"

"My information comes through my cousin, who is interpreter at police headquarters," replied Ah Lung. "I am prepared to tell you what I know of the Chinese princess. I suppose the information will interest you in any case."

"It certainly will," said the old detective. "Fire away, Mr. Lung. This puts altogether a different face on the matter."

"It is this way," continued Ah Lung. "I have had frequent occasion in the course of business to visit China, and, being a merchant, am allowed to come and go as I please. When in Pekin, some three years ago, I was introduced to this Chinese princess, as you have called her. She is not actually a member of the Imperial family, but the daughter of a very wealthy Mandarin. I fell in love with her, and it was finally arranged that we should marry. It was my intention to go to China after her, but the illness of my brother Wun prevented it, so she started to come to me. I supposed her to be a passenger on the Manchuria, the last steamer in from China. I was so informed by letters I received, but when I went to meet her at the wharf, I was surprised to learn that her name was not on the passenger list. Both the purser and the steward informed me that she had not been seen on the steamer."

"I immediately cabled to China, but it was only to be told that she had started for Shanghai with the intention of taking passage on the Manchuria, and that it was supposed by the family that she had done so. She traveled from Pekin in company of a man named Wang Foo, a cousin of hers. This person was to return to Pekin after seeing the princess off. He had failed to put in an appearance at the time the answer to my cablegram was sent, nor had anything been heard from him."

"You can imagine my anxiety, gentlemen. I was quite at a loss to know what to do when my cousin told me the story of your adventures with that bunch of opium smugglers. That was late last night, and not wishing to disturb you, I put off my call until this morning. If you can find my intended, you will probably also solve the mystery of the disappearance of your partner. It is up to you."

"Oh we will take up your case, of course, Mr. Lung," said Old King Brady. "Have you any idea what the motive for all this can be? Any starting clew to give us?"

"None whatever. I am just as much in the dark over the matter as you are."

"Suppose this Wang Foo wanted to marry the princess?"

"Would he box her up and treat her as he has if he loved her?" put in Harry, speaking for the first time.

"Listen," said Ah Lung, "Chinamen are not all fiends, as you may think."

"I don't think so," retorted Harry. "There are white fiends as well as yellow fiends."

"You are more liberal-minded than most of your race," replied the Chinaman, "but we will leave the white fiends out of the question. Yellow ones there certainly are in this town, and I greatly fear that it is into their hands the princess has fallen."

"Is there money coming to the man who marries her?" demanded Old King Brady, abruptly.

"That's just it. There was \$20,000 of what you call dowry to go with the princess. As you are probably aware, among my people women rarely carry with them dowry. On the other hand, men who want to marry have to pay for their wives – buy them, you call it, though I never could understand where the difference comes in between paying for husbands, as is done right along in America. However, that is not the point. In this case it is different. The Princess Skeep Hup had in her own right \$10,000, given to her by her mother. As our women do not take care of their own money matters, that money was to come to me. It was sent to me by mail in the form of a draft on the Bank of California, and I have it now, so that can't be the reason for kidnaping the princess, you see."

"All of which makes the mystery additionally puzzling," said Old King Brady. "But now listen, you, Mr. Lung. There is but just one thing certain in this case outside of the fact that a voice from that box told Miss Montgomery that the Princess Skeep Hup was inside, which I, knowing her knowledge of Chinese, believe."

"So do I," declared Ah Lung, emphatically. "I know Miss Montgomery by reputation, and can well believe it. But this one thing you speak of!"

"Is the fact that the matter was managed by opium smugglers. If we can catch on to who these people were we may stand some chance of success in our chase after this Chinese princess."

Ah Lung sat silent for some time.

"What you say is true," he said at last. "I could help you in that if – "

"Well, if?"

"If I could feel sure that the Secret Service people would not interfere with me."

"In other words, Lung & Lung sometimes deal in smuggled hop."

"I make no statements. What I want is a guarantee."

"Assure me upon your honor that you are not mixed up with this gang and you shall have it."

"Oh, I do, Mr. Brady; indeed I do. The worst Lung & Lung have ever done is to buy cheap opium without asking questions."

"Very well, I accept that. Do what you will. I want to help you out and to help myself out at the same time. Now then, what do you propose?"

"Listen here," said Ah Lung, lowering his voice. "You Secret Service men captured a lot of that opium the other night, but you didn't get it all by any means. There was another boat load which ran in ahead of the one you captured."

"I can well believe it. The people in that boat fired at me in the fog."

"I am told that Young King Brady is very successful in masquerading as a Chinaman."

"Who told you that?" demanded Harry.

"My cousin at Police Headquarters."

"And what about it?"

"Can you meet me to-night at eight o'clock at our store on Dupont street so disguised?"

"I could, of course. But why?"

"I must not tell, but you can guess. I have an appointment. I want you with me."

"I'll go, but there is one thing you must understand, I can't speak Chinese. I always play the dummy when I disguise that way."

"That will be all right. I was born in San Francisco, and, as it happens, brought up in a part of the city where I associated only with English-speaking children. My own knowledge of the Chinese language is very poor. I never speak it unless I am obliged to. I won't speak it in this interview. You can and shall be a witness to all that is said. I know you play the dummy when in Chinese disguise. I want you to play it to-night."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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