

The Case of the Missing Ring

Because of Idaville's wonderful police record, Chief Brown was often asked to solve cases in other towns.

One evening he received a call to help the police of Ocean City. He took Encyclopedia with him.

"What is the case all about?" asked Encyclopedia, getting into the car beside his father.

"A ring is missing," answered Chief Brown. "Two masked men broke into the home of Mr. James Bevan last night. But no one, including Mr. Bevan, is sure the ring was stolen."

"How come?" said Encyclopedia.

"I didn't get all the facts over the tele-

phone," replied Chief Brown. "But the mystery has to do with Mr. Bevan himself. He lost his memory. He left a note, but he doesn't remember writing it."

Encyclopedia had never come up against anything like *that*. The half hour's drive seemed to take all night.

At last his father slowed the car and parked before a large house.

Chief Moore of the Ocean City police department appeared at the door.

"I'm glad you could come," he said. "This case has me going around in circles."

After shaking hands, he led Encyclopedia and his father into the study.

"The house belongs to Mr. James Bevan," he said. "The theft of the ring—if there was a theft—took place last night."

"What does the ring look like?" asked Chief Brown.

"It's a diamond ring," said Chief Moore. "It belonged to King Louis XIV of France. It's worth a fortune!"

Chief Moore pointed to a tiny glass box which lay on the desk beside a typewriter.

"Mr. Bevan kept the ring in the glass box to admire it," he said. "It was too small to fit his finger."

Then, for the next few minutes he told Chief Brown and Encyclopedia what he knew about the case. The facts were:

On the night of the theft, Mrs. Bevan had gone to a movie. Mr. Bevan had stayed home, for he needed a cane to get around and seldom went out.

About midnight the doorbell rang. Mr. Bevan, who was alone in the house, opened the door. Two masked men pushed their way inside. They demanded to know where the diamond ring was kept.

Mr. Bevan told them it was upstairs in his wife's jewelry case. He wanted time to hide the ring. As the men started upstairs, one of them hit him on the head with a gun.

"That's all Mr. Bevan can tell me," said Chief Moore. "I spoke with him this morning in the hospital. He can't remember a thing that happened between the time he was hit and the moment he woke up in the hospital."

"Did the two thieves steal Mrs. Bevan's jewels?" asked Chief Brown.

"Yes, but Mrs. Bevan says the whole lot isn't worth half of the diamond ring."

"Is there any clue to prove that Mr. Bevan, after he was hit on the head, hid the

diamond ring so the thieves couldn't find it?" said Chief Brown.

"This typewritten note," said Chief Moore, taking a sheet of paper from his pocket. He showed it to Chief Brown and Encyclopedia. It read:

"Two men tried to steal the diamond ring. They hunted all over the house, raving about like madmen. They even split open the cat! When all failed, they beat me, but I didn't tell and so they hunted a little while longer. I may be dying. I hid the ring in the vane."

"If I understand the case so far," said Chief Brown, "Mr. Bevan wrote the note to his wife while the thieves searched the house. He feared he was dying from the beating and might not live to tell where he hid the diamond."

"Correct," said Chief Moore. "He must have put the note in a drawer of the desk after the thieves had searched it. Now he can't remember anything. He can't recall hiding the diamond ring or typing the note."

"Who found him?" asked Chief Brown.

"His wife—when she returned from the

movie," said Chief Brown. "He was lying on the floor near the desk."

"Did you look for the ring in the vane?" asked Chief Brown. "The note says he hid it there."

"The only vane Mr. Bevan knows of is the weather vane on the roof," said Chief Moore. "I took it down. The ring wasn't inside it."

"What about the cat?"

"That part is the biggest mystery," said Chief Moore. "Why should thieves split open a cat, unless they thought the poor animal had swallowed the ring?"

"Did you find its body?" asked Chief Brown.

"No," answered Chief Moore. "Mr. Bevan never owned a cat. I suppose a cat must have got into the house somehow, and the thieves took no chances. They looked into everything. Why, they tore the house apart. Come with me."

He led Encyclopedia and Chief Brown down to the basement. It was in ruins. Everything was overturned. A large wooden barrel, or vat, had been split open. Wine from it spilled over the floor.

"This morning the rest of the house looked as bad," said Chief Moore. "Mrs. Bevan worked all day with the help of neighbors straightening up."

"Perhaps the thieves did find the diamond ring," said Chief Brown. "They might have typed the note themselves to throw us off their trail."

"No, they didn't, Dad," whispered Encyclopedia. "The diamond ring is hidden in—"

WHERE?



Mrs. Bevan returned and found him lying on the floor near the desk.

*(Turn to page 107 for the solution to
The Case of the Missing Ring.)*