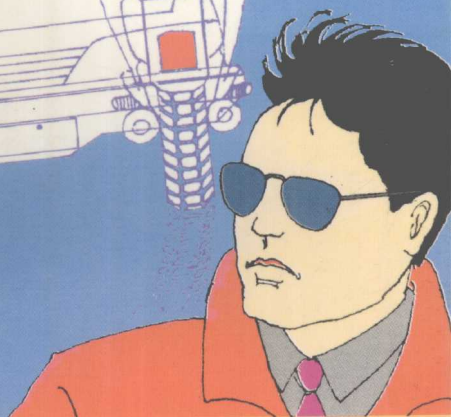
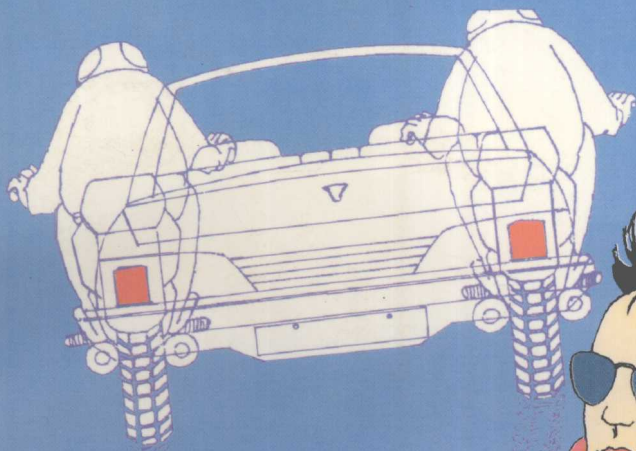


THE NARROW ESCAPE



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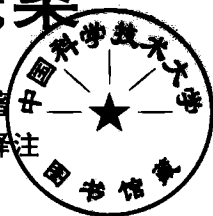
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贾文浩 陈爱萍 译注



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Welcome to Your New Job!

Welcome to the Bureau of Investigation. My name is Detective Alexander Riddle. As you know, this is my last day on the job. You will be my replacement.

I was a detective here for ten years, ever since 5
I got out of law school. It's a good place to work. Chief Anvil is a tough but fair boss. But I decided that being a detective was not what I wanted to do in life, so I went back to school — to be an artist. 10

When I left the Bureau, Chief Anvil asked me to come back and help out during vacations and whenever I had extra time. I'm glad to do it.

Now I am turning my latest batch of files over 15
to you. As you will see, I do my best thinking with a pencil and a drawing pad in my hands. For every case, I have sketched a drawing of the scene of the crime. There are often clues at the scene of a crime that a sharp eye can detect. Take a 20

good look at the drawing and read my report of the case.

At the end of each case you will find another drawing. This drawing shows my sketch that
5 solves the mystery. You will notice that I have cut this drawing into pieces and rearranged the pieces.

I have done this for two reasons.

First, you will have a chance to check my report
10 and come to your own conclusion about the case. Then you can check your solution with mine by cutting out the puzzle pieces and putting my drawing back together again. (If you're having trouble putting the puzzle together, the number on the
15 back of each piece will help you find the correct order. If you can't wait to do the puzzle, you can also find my written solution at the end of each case.)

Second, Chief Anvil is a puzzle fan. He loves
20 putting together jigsaw puzzles. When I found this out, I decided to always give him the solutions to my cases as jigsaw puzzles. This way he could put them together for himself.

Well, I see it's getting late. Gosh, I'll miss this
25 place. Here are my files. Good luck! I'm headed back to art school.

You be the detective!

The Case of the Missing Guest



On May 15, I was at my desk at headquarters doodling on my sketch pad, when a phone call came in.

“Alexander Riddle?” The voice sounded familiar. “This is Dottie Warner.”

5

I caught my breath. It was Mrs. W. — my fifth-grade teacher! I remembered her right away.

“Alexander, I haven’t spoken with you in years,” she continued, “but I need your help. Remember that motel I bought? Well, my last guest 10 disappeared. I think he may have done something awful. He didn’t pay his bill, either. Can you help me find him?”

"I remember the place. I'll leave right now," I said. "But . . . call me Alex."

A half an hour later, I nosed my car into a parking space under the big neon sign at Dottie's
5 Motor Court.

Mrs. W. had purchased Dottie's Motor Court, planning for her retirement. She had expected she would need some extra income. Now, with the help of her young clerk, she rented rooms to travelers who could not afford something more expensive downtown.
10

"No time for the tour, Alex," she said. With her dog, Buster, at her side, she led me straight to the second floor.

15 "The guest said his name was Marlo," she explained. "He asked for a room with a high ceiling and brought an enormous trunk with him. It shook the steps as he dragged it upstairs. Everything seemed very suspicious."

20 "Tell me about him."

"Well, for one thing he spoke in a deep, controlled voice. Rather unusual. Anyhow, I left soon after he arrived. I was headed to the county fair.

"When I came back, Buster and I took a look
25 around to check that all was well. When I passed room 23, something was wrong. I heard two voices.

"I recognized the deeper voice. It belonged to

Marlo. I'd never heard the other voice before. It was very high-pitched and sounded like no one I had ever heard. Very strange. At least twice, Marlo called this other person 'Billie.'

"Moments later, the voices disappeared. It was 5 so quiet I could hear the chimes in the library. Next came a tremendous crash. Glass breaking. Hard objects falling. It startled Buster.

"Then I heard Marlo's voice again — an angry voice. Buster tugged at me. Then I heard the 10 other voice again. Soon, it sounded like an argument. The voices became louder and louder."

"You didn't call for help."

"I didn't need help. I pounded on the door a few times to get some quiet for my other guests. But 15 as suddenly as the argument had started, it stopped again. Silence again. No voices at all."

I shook my head. What dark secret did room 23 have hidden behind its wooden door?

When she had heard sounds of someone moving 20 the trunk, Mrs. W. had decided to retreat with Buster to room 24 across the hall. She peeked through the keyhole. Soon, the door to 23 had opened.

"The trunk came out with him — *clunk* — over 25 the threshold," Mrs. W. explained. "Then *ca-clunk, ca-clunk, ca-clunk* down the steps. I heard a car start, and he was gone."

"Did Billie come out with him?" I asked.

"No," replied Mrs. W., "and I don't think he's still in the room. Marlo must have shoved him in the trunk."

5 "Let's have a look."

As Mrs. W. swung open the unlocked door to room 23, I gave a shiver. I expected to see blood. But I was surprised. Room 23 was a bright room with a very high ceiling. A shattered skylight
10 marked its exact center.

"What a room."

"I charge a bit extra for this one. Most people don't seem to mind. Of course, we know now why Marlo didn't mind. He wasn't going to pay his
15 bill."

"He left quite a mess, too," I observed.

Broken glass from the skylight littered the floor and the bed.

I noticed that Buster seemed very interested
20 in something under the bed. He began to sniff vigorously. But he wouldn't leave Mrs. W.'s side. She stopped beside the bed. Under her right foot lay a piece of clothing.

"And this. What is this?"

25 She stooped down and pulled out what seemed to be a bunched-up sweater or jacket.

"It looks small," she said, holding it up by the shoulders for me to see.

"Ruffles, too," she said, fingering the shoulders of the jacket. To me it looked handmade. Embroidery ran up and down the sides. Could it fit a small child? Barely. It also had a long slit down the back. This puzzled me greatly. I decided to 5 make a sketch.



When I laid the jacket on the bed, Buster wouldn't let it alone.

"Did Marlo have a dog with him?" I asked.

"Only working dogs are allowed here," said Mrs. W. "Like Buster. I make it a practice not to 5 allow any guests with pets. A sign in the office says so quite clearly."

"This looks to me like a jacket for a small dog," I told her. "Maybe a dachshund? The slit in the back might have fit around a leash." 10

"Buster would have let me know if a dog were on the property. Wouldn't you, Buster?"

At these words, Buster barked.

I continued my inspection of the room.

On the table I found four large dinner plates 15 stacked neatly. Nearby lay five large, sharp butcher knives.

"Looks like Marlo had dinner planned, too. I wonder a bit about his choice of silverware, though." As I explained what I saw, Mrs. W. 20 became very quiet.

"My guests know that I allow no food in my rooms. Do you see blood?"

"Nothing. Not a trace. No food, either."

I picked up a knife with my handkerchief. It 25 was perfectly clean, and very shiny.

I felt relieved, but also puzzled. Why were there plates and knives, but no forks? Nothing added

up. Marlo had been in such a hurry that he hadn't bothered to clean up, and had left his own property behind.

5 And why the huge trunk? Could it really have held a person inside? Would Marlo have been strong enough to haul it downstairs?

"You are certain this 'Billie' wasn't a child?" I asked.

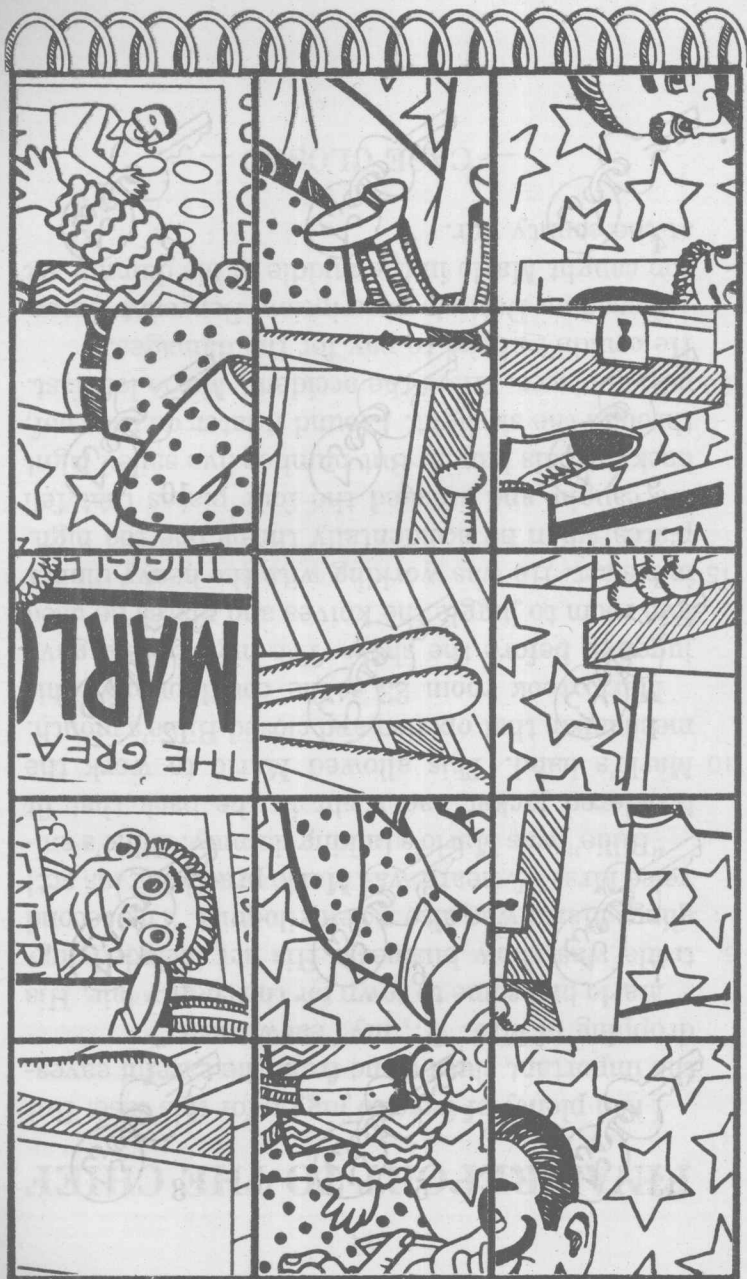
10 She seemed to be thinking. "I'm certain." I held up the jacket one last time. Could it belong to a monkey? Could Marlo be an organ grinder? Of course not; monkeys don't speak.

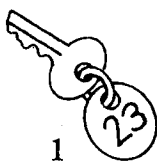
I asked Mrs. W. to wait downstairs, and I started to draw. It all seems rather puzzling, I
15 said to myself as I sketched.

A dog jacket? Knives without forks? Nothing seemed to make sense.

Suddenly, my face broke into a broad smile. I looked at my new drawing, then I cut it up and
20 put it in my sketch pad. After a quick visit to the roof, I got a working description of Marlo from the clerk. I knew exactly where to find him.

Chief Anvil was certain to find this case quite entertaining. Besides, he's known all along that I
25 was no dummy.





FINAL REPORT TO THE CHIEF

I had plenty of facts to juggle for this case. But the important clues came from the careful eaves-dropping of Mrs. W., my "earwitness."

Mario had come to town for the county fair. His trade was show business. His act included juggling. Mario was also a ventriloquist. The second voice Mrs. W. heard was Mario practicing his act! "Billie" was Mario's talking dummy. Billie's embroidered jacket had a slit in the back that fit Mario's hand. This allowed Mario to work the mechanism that opened and closed Billie's mouth. Mario took room 23 so he could practice his juggling before the show. The high ceiling gave him room to juggle the knives and plates he used in his act. He was working with the heavy dinner plates when he accidentally threw one too high. He caught and stacked the four plates that fell back into his hands. But number five sailed right through the skylight. I found it later on the roof, in two pieces. After the accident, Mario left fast. He couldn't afford to pay for the damages. Based on Dotie's description, Sergeant Emer-son caught Mario in the middle of his dummy act at the county fair.

— CASE CLOSED —