

## **AI-Generated Graded Readers**

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### **About This Edition**

This book is a simplified English adaptation created for extensive reading practice.

The text was generated using ChatGPT and prepared for intermediate English learners as part of an educational project.

Target reading level: CEFR A2-B1

This edition aims to support fluency development through accessible vocabulary, expanded narration, and improved readability while preserving the original story structure.

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G. K. Chesterton, *The Innocence of Father Brown* (Simplified Edition, Adapted and Simplified by ChatGPT)

## The Blue Cross

### Part 1

Paris was full of excitement that day. The streets were bright and noisy, and people talked about one thing more than anything else: the great criminal Flambeau. His name was known across Europe. He was very tall and very strong. He was clever, bold, and often dangerous. The police of many countries had tried to catch him, but he had escaped again and again.

But there was one man who believed he would catch him soon. That man was Aristide Valentin, the famous chief of the Paris police. Valentin was not tall or loud. He was quiet and thoughtful. He watched everything carefully and spoke very little. When he walked through the streets, people did not notice him. But he noticed them.

Valentin had good reason to think Flambeau was near. The criminal had been seen in Paris recently, and several valuable things had almost been stolen. Valentin had studied the clues. He believed Flambeau was preparing for another bold crime.

On that same morning, Valentin was walking through a small square not far from a church. The air was cool, and the sky was pale. People were already moving through the streets: shopkeepers, workers, and travelers. Valentin stopped for a moment near a small restaurant.

It was not a fine restaurant. It was a simple place where travelers could buy coffee and bread. Valentin entered quietly and sat near a window. He ordered coffee and watched the room.

Soon the door opened again. A small man entered. He wore the black clothes of a Catholic priest. His face was round and pale, and he carried a large, old umbrella. Everything about him seemed simple and ordinary.

The priest sat at a table and began to eat bread and drink coffee. Valentin noticed

something curious. The priest seemed calm, but he was also watching people carefully. His eyes moved quietly from one face to another.

Valentin looked again. The priest also carried a small brown parcel tied with string. He placed it beside his plate and sometimes touched it, as if he wished to be sure it was still there.

Valentin wondered about this simple man. The priest did not look like a person connected with crime. Yet Valentin had learned that the smallest details sometimes mattered most.

A few minutes later another man entered the restaurant. This man was tall and handsome. He had dark hair and a black mustache. His clothes were elegant and fashionable. When he spoke, his voice was friendly and warm.

He looked around the room and then walked toward the priest.

“Good morning, Father,” the tall man said politely. “May I sit here?”

The priest looked up with a friendly smile.

“Of course,” he said. “Please sit down.”

The tall man sat and began speaking easily.

“You are traveling, Father?” he asked.

“Yes,” the priest replied. “I am going to London.”

“London?” said the tall man with interest. “Then you will cross the Channel today?”

“That is my plan,” said the priest.

The tall man spoke warmly and pleasantly. He seemed to enjoy conversation. Valentin, who watched quietly from the window, noticed that the priest answered every question in a simple and open way.

“My name is Brown,” the priest said at last. “Father Brown.”

“A pleasure to meet you,” said the tall man. “Travel can be lonely. It is good to meet friendly people.”

They talked about travel, churches, and the weather. But soon the tall man’s eyes moved toward the small brown parcel beside the priest.

“You are carrying something valuable, Father?” he asked lightly.

Father Brown looked surprised.

“Oh yes,” he said simply. “It is a silver cross with blue stones. It belongs to a church in London.”

Valentin felt a sudden interest. A silver cross with blue stones would be very valuable. And if a criminal like Flambeau wanted to steal something, this kind of object would be perfect.

The tall man smiled politely.

“Very beautiful, I am sure,” he said.

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes, it is beautiful,” he said. “But I must be careful. Thieves exist everywhere.”

The tall man laughed.

“You are right, Father. The world can be dangerous.”

After some time the two men finished their coffee. They left the restaurant together and walked into the street.

Valentin waited a moment and then followed them quietly.

He did not know yet whether the tall man was Flambeau. But he had learned something important in his long career: strange meetings were often the beginning of strange stories.

The two travelers walked slowly through the streets of Paris. The priest spoke cheerfully, waving his umbrella while he talked. The tall man listened and sometimes laughed.

Soon they stopped at another small restaurant.

Valentin watched them enter.

He followed again a few minutes later.

Inside the room something strange had happened. Soup was spilled across the wall, and the waiter looked confused and angry.

Valentin looked around carefully.

But the two travelers had already gone.

Valentin stood silently for a moment.

Then he smiled slightly.

“Interesting,” he said softly.

The strange trail had begun.

## Part 2

Aristide Valentin stood quietly in the restaurant and looked at the strange mark on the wall. A large bowl of soup had clearly been thrown against it. The yellow liquid was still slowly sliding down the white surface. The waiter was very angry and was speaking loudly to the cook.

“I do not understand it!” the waiter cried. “The little priest did it! He suddenly stood up and threw the soup!”

The cook looked just as confused.

“Why would a priest do that?” he asked.

Valentin listened quietly. He said nothing, but his eyes were bright with interest.

“The priest paid before he left?” Valentin asked calmly.

“Yes,” the waiter said. “He paid and apologized. But it was still very strange.”

Valentin nodded and stepped back outside into the street. The morning air was cool, and the city was growing busier. Carriages moved past, and people filled the sidewalks.

Valentin did not hurry. But he began to walk in the same direction that the priest and the tall man had taken.

He did not yet know what the strange event meant. But he trusted one thing: small absurd actions sometimes formed a pattern.

After several streets he saw another small restaurant. The door stood open. Valentin stepped inside.

Again something strange had happened.

The waiter stood behind the counter looking very upset. Several bottles stood on a shelf behind him, but their labels were wrong. A bottle of salt was marked “sugar.” A bottle of sugar was marked “salt.” Other bottles had also been changed.

Valentin walked to the counter.

“Good morning,” he said politely. “Has a small priest been here?”

The waiter raised his hands in anger.

“Yes! And he was a very foolish man!” he said. “He changed all the labels on

my bottles. Now everything is confused!”

Valentin asked quietly, “Was he alone?”

“No,” the waiter said. “A tall gentleman was with him. A very polite man. But the priest was the one who caused trouble.”

Valentin thanked him and left.

Now the detective was certain that the events were not accidents. Someone was leaving signs. The soup on the wall, the labels on the bottles—these were strange signals placed along a path.

But why?

Valentin walked farther along the street. Soon he reached a small shop where a window had been broken. The shopkeeper stood outside, shaking his head sadly.

Valentin approached him.

“Was the window broken today?” he asked.

“Yes,” the shopkeeper said. “A priest did it!”

Valentin lifted his eyebrows.

“A priest?”

“Yes,” the shopkeeper continued. “He walked past with another man and suddenly struck the window with his umbrella. Then he apologized and hurried away.”

Valentin looked at the broken glass.

Now the pattern was very clear.

Every strange action had been performed by the small priest. And each action left a visible sign behind.

Valentin smiled again.

“Very interesting,” he murmured.

He continued to follow the strange trail through the city. It led across several streets and finally toward a quieter road that left the crowded center of Paris.

After some time Valentin reached a small park area. Trees grew beside the road, and the noise of the city became softer.

On a bench near the path sat a man eating bread.

It was the same small priest.

Father Brown sat peacefully, holding a piece of bread and looking at the sky.  
His umbrella leaned against the bench.

Valentin approached slowly.

“Good afternoon, Father,” he said.

Father Brown looked up cheerfully.

“Oh! Good afternoon,” he replied. “What a pleasant day.”

Valentin sat beside him.

“You have had an interesting morning,” Valentin said quietly.

Father Brown looked thoughtful.

“Yes,” he said. “Very interesting.”

Valentin studied the priest’s round face.

“You threw soup at a wall,” Valentin said calmly.

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

“You changed the labels on bottles.”

“Yes.”

“You broke a shop window.”

“Yes,” Father Brown said again.

Valentin folded his hands.

“Why?”

Father Brown looked around the quiet park.

“Because I wanted someone clever to follow me,” he said.

Valentin’s eyes became sharp.

“And who is that someone?”

Father Brown smiled gently.

“You,” he said.

For a moment Valentin said nothing.

Then he asked another question.

“And where is the tall gentleman who was with you?”

Father Brown pointed toward the trees in the distance.

“He will be here soon,” he said.

Valentin turned his head.

From the far path a tall figure was slowly approaching.

The man walked with long, confident steps.

Valentin watched carefully.

At last the tall man stopped a few steps away.

He looked from Valentin to Father Brown.

Then he laughed.

“Well,” he said, “it seems the game is finished.”

### Part 3

The tall man stood on the path and looked calmly at the two men on the bench. For a moment no one spoke. The trees moved gently in the wind, and a few birds flew across the quiet park.

Then the tall man laughed again.

“You have done very well,” he said. “Both of you.”

Valentin rose slowly from the bench.

“Flambeau,” he said quietly.

The tall man bowed politely.

“Yes,” he said. “You have found me at last.”

Flambeau looked relaxed and confident. He was much taller than Valentin and far stronger. But Valentin showed no fear.

“I suspected you earlier today,” Valentin said. “But I did not understand everything.”

Flambeau turned toward Father Brown.

“And I did not understand him,” he said with a smile.

Father Brown sat quietly with his hands folded.

“You almost succeeded,” the priest said gently.

Flambeau laughed.

“Almost?” he said. “I think I succeeded very well. I walked beside you all morning. You trusted me completely.”

Father Brown shook his head slowly.

“No,” he said.

Flambeau looked surprised.

“You did not trust me?”

“Not at all,” Father Brown replied.

Valentin watched the priest with growing interest.

Flambeau crossed his arms.

“Then why did you tell me about the cross?” he asked. “Why did you show me that you were carrying something valuable?”

Father Brown spoke calmly.

“Because I already knew who you were.”

Flambeau stared at him.

“You knew?”

“Yes,” said Father Brown.

Flambeau frowned.

“But how?”

Father Brown lifted his umbrella and rested it across his knees.

“You asked too many questions,” he said simply. “You were too interested in the cross.”

Flambeau smiled again.

“That does not prove anything.”

“No,” Father Brown agreed. “But I have heard stories about you. I knew that a man like Flambeau might try to steal such a thing.”

Flambeau’s eyes narrowed.

“So you left those strange signs in the city,” he said slowly.

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

Valentin spoke.

“The soup, the broken window, the labels,” he said. “You wanted someone to follow the trail.”

“Exactly,” said Father Brown.

Flambeau laughed loudly.

“And you hoped that someone would be the famous detective Valentin?”

Father Brown shrugged.

“I hoped it would be someone intelligent,” he said.

Valentin smiled slightly.

“You were lucky,” he said.

Flambeau looked again at the priest.

“But you made one mistake,” he said. “You told me you were carrying the cross.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

Flambeau stepped forward.

“Then give it to me,” he said calmly. “I am stronger than both of you.”

Father Brown remained seated.

“I cannot give it to you,” he said.

Flambeau smiled.

“Then I will take it.”

He reached toward the small brown parcel beside the priest.

Father Brown lifted the parcel and held it gently.

“You may take this one,” he said.

Flambeau quickly untied the string and opened the paper.

Inside was not the silver cross.

It was only a small package of cheap metal.

Flambeau stared at it in silence.

Then he looked up.

Father Brown was smiling kindly.

“I changed the parcels this morning,” the priest said. “When you were not looking.”

Valentin spoke quietly.

“Where is the real cross?”

Father Brown pointed toward Valentin’s coat.

Valentin looked surprised.

He reached into his pocket.  
Inside he found a small wrapped object.  
He opened it.  
The silver cross with the blue stones shone in the sunlight.  
Flambeau looked from the cross to the priest.  
Then he suddenly began to laugh.  
“You are a remarkable man, Father Brown,” he said.  
Father Brown shook his head.  
“No,” he said gently. “I only understand thieves.”  
Flambeau looked curious.  
“How?”  
Father Brown answered quietly.  
“Because I have thought about all the ways a man can become a thief.”  
The tall criminal stood silently for a moment.  
Then he sighed.  
“Well,” he said, “it seems I must accept defeat today.”  
Valentin stepped forward.  
The great criminal Flambeau was finally caught.  
But Father Brown simply stood, opened his umbrella, and prepared to continue his quiet journey to London.

## The Secret Garden

### Part 1

Aristide Valentin was a man who liked order. He believed that the world should be clear and logical. For that reason he enjoyed hosting small dinners at his house in Paris. At these dinners he invited people who were intelligent, interesting, and sometimes even a little strange.

On one warm evening he prepared such a dinner. The sky above Paris was soft and blue, and the air carried the smell of summer. Valentin's house stood in a quiet street behind tall stone walls. Inside the walls there was a small garden.

The garden was unusual. It was completely surrounded by the high walls of the house. No door led directly into it from the street. The only way to reach it was through the house itself.

Valentin liked the garden very much. It was peaceful and private. Tall trees grew there, and flowers climbed along the old stone.

On this evening the house was bright with light. Servants moved quietly through the rooms preparing the table. The dinner guests began to arrive one by one.

One of the first guests was Father Brown. The small priest had come to Paris again during his travels. As usual he carried his old umbrella and wore his simple black clothes.

Valentin greeted him warmly.

"Father Brown," he said, shaking his hand. "I am glad you could come."

"Thank you," Father Brown replied. "I always enjoy good company."

Other guests soon arrived. Among them was an Irish officer named O'Brien. He was a large, cheerful man with a red face and a loud laugh.

Another guest was Lady Margaret Graham, a young English woman known for her beauty and intelligence. She carried herself with calm confidence and spoke quietly but clearly.

There were also several men interested in politics and science. Valentin liked

conversations where many ideas met and sometimes argued.

At last the guests gathered around the dinner table.

The conversation moved from one subject to another. They spoke about politics, religion, and the strange events that sometimes happened in Europe.

At one moment the talk turned to crime.

O'Brien laughed loudly.

"Paris is a wonderful city," he said. "But it seems criminals also enjoy it very much."

Valentin smiled calmly.

"That may be true," he said. "But criminals do not always enjoy meeting the police."

Everyone laughed.

Father Brown sat quietly and listened. He often looked thoughtful, as if he were hearing something deeper behind the conversation.

After the main meal the guests moved to another room for coffee.

The night air had become cooler. Some guests wished to see the garden.

"Let us step outside," Valentin suggested. "The garden is very pleasant in the evening."

He opened the glass doors that led into the garden. Several guests followed him outside.

The garden was quiet and dark except for the soft light from the house behind them. The trees moved gently in the night wind.

For a moment everyone enjoyed the peaceful scene.

Then Lady Margaret suddenly stopped walking.

"What is that?" she whispered.

Everyone turned.

On the ground near the center of the garden lay a dark shape.

Valentin stepped closer.

The others followed slowly.

When Valentin reached the shape he bent down and looked carefully.

Then he stood up again.

His face had changed.

“There has been a murder,” he said quietly.

The guests looked in horror.

On the grass lay the body of a man.

But something about the body was terribly strange.

The man had no head.

For a moment no one spoke.

The quiet garden suddenly felt cold and frightening.

O’Brien stepped back.

“Good heaven,” he said. “How could this happen here?”

Valentin looked slowly around the garden.

The high walls surrounded them on every side.

The only door led through the house.

No stranger could enter without passing through the rooms where the guests had been dining.

Valentin spoke calmly, but his voice was serious.

“No one leaves the house,” he said.

The guests exchanged uneasy looks.

The mystery had already begun.

And the secret garden held a terrible secret.

## Part 2

For several seconds no one moved. The quiet garden seemed suddenly very small. The high walls rose around them like dark stone cliffs.

Valentin stood still, looking carefully at the body on the grass.

“Please remain calm,” he said. “No one will leave the house until we understand what has happened.”

The guests looked uneasy, but no one protested. They all knew that Valentin was the chief of the Paris police. If he said the house must remain closed, then it would remain closed.

O'Brien stepped forward cautiously and looked down at the body.

"This is terrible," he murmured. "But who is the man?"

Valentin shook his head.

"I do not know yet," he said.

The body lay on its back. The clothes were good but not unusual: a dark coat, clean shirt, and neat shoes. Everything suggested an ordinary gentleman.

Except for the most shocking detail.

The head was missing.

Lady Margaret turned away, pale.

"I cannot look," she whispered.

Father Brown stood quietly beside Valentin. He did not look frightened, but his face showed deep thought.

Valentin bent down again and examined the body carefully. After a moment he stood and looked around the garden.

"Search the garden," he said to the servants who had gathered near the door. "Look everywhere."

The servants began moving through the garden, lifting branches and examining the grass. But after several minutes they found nothing.

No head.

No weapon.

Nothing that explained the crime.

Valentin spoke again.

"Let us return inside," he said. "We must speak calmly and think clearly."

The group moved slowly back into the house. The bright lights inside felt almost strange after the dark garden.

They gathered in the dining room again. The table still held the remains of dinner, but now the mood was very different.

Valentin stood at the head of the table.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "this situation is very serious. A man has been murdered in my garden. Because the garden cannot be entered from outside, we must consider the possibility that the murderer is inside this house."

The words hung heavily in the air.

O'Brien spoke first.

"Surely that cannot be true," he said. "None of us would do such a thing."

Valentin answered calmly.

"Perhaps not. But we must follow the facts."

He turned toward one of the servants.

"Did anyone enter the house during dinner?" he asked.

The servant shook his head.

"No, sir. The doors were watched."

"Did anyone leave?"

"No, sir."

Valentin nodded slowly.

"Then the dead man must have been inside the house already."

Lady Margaret looked confused.

"But we never saw him," she said.

Valentin looked thoughtful.

"Exactly."

For a moment the room was silent.

Then Father Brown spoke quietly.

"May I ask a question?"

Valentin nodded.

"Of course."

Father Brown looked around the room.

"Did anyone hear anything unusual tonight?" he asked.

O'Brien thought for a moment.

"No," he said. "The evening was peaceful."

Another guest spoke.

"I remember hearing footsteps in the hallway," he said slowly. "But that is not strange in a house like this."

Father Brown nodded thoughtfully.

"Footsteps," he repeated.

Valentin studied the priest.

“Do you see something important, Father?”

Father Brown shook his head gently.

“Not yet,” he said. “But I think the answer is very simple.”

Valentin raised an eyebrow.

“A headless body in a locked garden does not seem simple.”

Father Brown gave a small smile.

“Sometimes,” he said, “the strangest mysteries are simple once we stop looking in the wrong direction.”

Valentin folded his arms.

“And which direction is wrong?”

Father Brown looked toward the dark garden outside the window.

“The garden,” he said quietly.

Valentin followed his gaze.

The silent trees moved gently in the night wind.

And somewhere in that peaceful place lay a terrible secret that no one yet understood.

### Part 3

The guests sat quietly in the dining room while Valentin began his careful questioning. The lamps burned steadily above the table, but the atmosphere had become tense and uneasy.

Valentin was a patient man. He did not hurry. One by one he asked each guest where they had been during the evening.

Every answer seemed ordinary.

Everyone had been in the dining room together during the meal. No one had gone out into the garden until Valentin opened the door himself after dinner.

Yet the dead body had clearly been lying there already.

That was the terrible puzzle.

O’Brien leaned forward and spoke with frustration.

“This is impossible,” he said. “A man cannot appear in a closed garden without passing through the house.”

“Exactly,” Valentin replied calmly.

Father Brown sat quietly near the end of the table. His round face looked peaceful, but his eyes moved slowly around the room, studying the people present.

After a moment he spoke again.

“May I ask another question?”

Valentin nodded.

“Please do.”

Father Brown turned toward Lady Margaret.

“Did you know the dead man?” he asked gently.

Lady Margaret looked surprised.

“No,” she said. “I have never seen him before.”

Father Brown nodded slowly.

Then he turned toward O’Brien.

“And you, Colonel?”

O’Brien shook his head.

“No. I do not recognize him either.”

Father Brown remained silent for a moment.

Then he looked at Valentin.

“May we see the body again?” he asked.

Valentin seemed surprised but agreed.

They returned to the garden together. The night had grown darker, and the lamps from the house cast long shadows across the grass.

The body still lay where it had been found.

Father Brown knelt beside it and examined the clothes carefully.

After a moment he stood up again.

“Yes,” he said quietly.

Valentin watched him closely.

“You understand something?” he asked.

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes,” he said. “I think I understand everything now.”

O’Brien looked shocked.

“Already?” he said.

Father Brown pointed gently toward the house.

“The answer is not in the garden,” he said. “It is in the house.”

They returned once more to the dining room.

The guests looked up nervously as Father Brown entered.

Valentin spoke first.

“Father Brown believes he understands the crime,” he said.

Everyone turned toward the priest.

Father Brown spoke gently, almost sadly.

“The mystery seems impossible because we imagine the wrong story,” he said.

“We imagine that the man came into the garden and was killed there.”

He paused.

“But that is not what happened.”

The room was silent.

Father Brown continued.

“The man was killed inside the house.”

O’Brien stared.

“Inside?” he said. “But we would have seen it!”

Father Brown shook his head.

“Not necessarily.”

Valentin leaned forward.

“Explain.”

Father Brown spoke calmly.

“The man entered the house earlier in the evening. He was not a guest. He was here for another purpose.”

“What purpose?” Lady Margaret asked softly.

Father Brown answered.

“To kill someone.”

The words fell heavily into the room.

Father Brown looked slowly around the table.

“But he failed,” he continued.

Valentin’s eyes sharpened.

“And who stopped him?”

Father Brown turned his head.

He looked directly at Colonel O’Brien.

For a moment no one moved.

Then Father Brown spoke quietly.

“You recognized him,” he said. “And you knew why he had come.”

O’Brien’s face turned pale.

The truth of the secret garden had finally begun to appear.

## The Queer Feet

### Part 1

In London there existed a famous dining club called The Twelve True Fishermen. It was a club of wealthy and powerful men. They were proud of their traditions and their importance. Only twelve members belonged to the club, and they met once a year for a special dinner.

The dinner was always held in a large and elegant hotel. Everything about the event was planned with great care. The tables were decorated beautifully. The food was excellent. The service was quiet and perfect.

But the members of the club also had a strange custom.

At this dinner the servants were not ordinary waiters. They were dressed like fishermen. They wore blue clothes and carried nets and ropes as decoration. The members of the club enjoyed this small joke.

On the evening of that year's dinner the hotel was full of activity. Servants moved quickly through the halls preparing everything for the important guests.

Among the guests in the hotel was a small priest named Father Brown.

Father Brown was staying at the hotel for a few days during his travels. As usual he carried his large umbrella and wore his simple black clothes.

He was sitting quietly in a comfortable chair in the hotel lounge. In front of him stood a large window that looked out over the street.

A tall man suddenly entered the room and greeted him warmly.

"Father Brown!" the man said with a smile.

The priest looked up.

"Ah," he said kindly. "Flambeau."

The tall man laughed.

Flambeau had changed greatly since the day when Valentin had arrested him in Paris. He was still tall and strong, but his face now showed calm confidence rather than danger.

He sat down beside Father Brown.

“I did not expect to see you here,” Flambeau said.

“Nor did I expect to see you,” Father Brown replied.

Flambeau looked toward the busy hotel hallway.

“Something interesting is happening here tonight,” he said. “The famous Fishermen’s Club is holding its annual dinner.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes, I heard about that.”

Flambeau leaned closer.

“Where wealthy men gather,” he said quietly, “valuable things often appear.”

Father Brown sighed softly.

“You are thinking like a criminal again,” he said.

Flambeau smiled.

“No,” he said. “I only notice what criminals might notice.”

Just then a hotel servant hurried through the room carrying a tray of silver dishes.

The hallway beyond was full of movement. Waiters in blue fisherman costumes walked back and forth carrying plates and glasses.

Father Brown watched them thoughtfully.

“It must be difficult work,” he said.

Flambeau nodded.

“Yes. Especially tonight.”

At that moment a small, nervous man entered the lounge. He was dressed in formal evening clothes and looked very worried.

Flambeau recognized him immediately.

“That is Mr. Audley,” he whispered. “He organizes the dinner.”

Mr. Audley walked quickly toward the desk and spoke urgently with a hotel manager.

Father Brown listened quietly.

“What is wrong?” he asked.

Flambeau stood up and walked a few steps closer to hear better. When he returned his expression was serious.

“A very valuable object is missing,” he said.

Father Brown raised his eyebrows.

“Already?”

Flambeau nodded.

“One of the guests brought a rare set of silver spoons,” he explained. “They were extremely valuable.”

Father Brown looked thoughtful.

“And now they are gone?”

“Yes,” Flambeau said.

The priest leaned back in his chair.

“Then someone in the hotel must have taken them.”

Flambeau nodded again.

“The difficulty,” he said slowly, “is that no stranger could enter the dining room. Only the club members and the servants were present.”

Father Brown looked toward the busy hallway again.

Servants walked back and forth carrying dishes.

Their footsteps sounded different depending on what they carried.

Some walked slowly and carefully.

Others walked quickly and lightly.

Father Brown listened closely.

“The answer may be in the footsteps,” he said quietly.

Flambeau looked confused.

“Footsteps?”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes,” he said. “Very strange footsteps.”

He smiled gently.

“Queer feet.”

## Part 2

Father Brown rose slowly from his chair and walked toward the hallway.

Flambeau followed him with curiosity.

The hallway outside the lounge was busy and bright. Servants hurried back and forth carrying plates, glasses, and bowls of food. The smell of roasted meat and warm bread filled the air.

From the dining room came the voices of the members of the Fishermen's Club. They were laughing loudly and talking with confidence. These were powerful men who were used to comfort and respect.

Father Brown stopped near the door that led into the dining room. He did not enter. Instead he stood quietly and listened.

Flambeau watched him.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"Listening," Father Brown said.

Flambeau listened too.

At first he heard only ordinary sounds: voices, plates touching the table, chairs moving slightly across the floor.

But then he noticed something else.

Footsteps.

Some footsteps were heavy and slow. They moved carefully, as if someone were carrying something fragile.

Other footsteps were light and quick. They moved easily across the floor.

Flambeau frowned.

"All servants do not walk the same way," he said.

Father Brown nodded.

"Exactly."

They remained near the door for several minutes.

More footsteps passed inside the dining room.

Some sounded careful and slow.

Others sounded confident and relaxed.

Father Brown turned away from the door.

"Let us walk," he said.

They moved quietly down another hallway. Here the noise from the dining

room became softer.

Flambeau finally spoke again.

“You believe the thief is one of the servants?” he asked.

Father Brown shook his head.

“No,” he said.

Flambeau looked surprised.

“Then who?”

Father Brown sat down again in a chair beside the wall.

“The thief is not a servant,” he said. “But he walks like one.”

Flambeau laughed softly.

“That sounds like a riddle.”

Father Brown smiled.

“It is a simple trick,” he said.

Flambeau leaned forward with interest.

“Explain.”

Father Brown pointed toward the dining room.

“Inside that room,” he said, “two kinds of people are walking.”

“The servants and the guests,” Flambeau said.

“Yes,” Father Brown replied.

“But the servants move differently from the guests. They walk carefully because they carry plates and food.”

Flambeau nodded.

“That is true.”

Father Brown continued.

“A servant who walks slowly with plates must return quickly to the kitchen. When he returns, his hands are empty. His steps become light and fast.”

Flambeau began to understand.

“So the footsteps change,” he said.

“Exactly,” Father Brown said.

He paused.

“But suppose a man wished to enter that room without being noticed.”

Flambeau's eyes widened.

"He would walk like a servant."

Father Brown nodded.

"Yes. He would walk slowly and carefully toward the table, pretending to carry something."

Flambeau spoke quietly.

"And when he leaves?"

Father Brown answered.

"He walks away quickly, like a man returning to the kitchen."

Flambeau leaned back in his chair.

"Then the thief could move through the room again and again."

Father Brown nodded.

"Yes."

Flambeau laughed suddenly.

"That is brilliant."

Father Brown looked thoughtful.

"It is also very simple."

At that moment the nervous organizer, Mr. Audley, hurried down the hallway again. His face looked even more worried.

"Terrible news," he said. "The spoons are still missing."

Father Brown stood up.

"Do not worry," he said gently.

Mr. Audley looked at him with surprise.

"You know where they are?"

Father Brown smiled quietly.

"Yes," he said.

He looked toward the dining room where the wealthy members of the Fishermen's Club continued their dinner.

"And I believe," he added softly, "I know who took them."

Part 3

Mr. Audley stared at Father Brown in confusion.

“You know who took the spoons?” he asked.

Father Brown nodded gently.

“Yes,” he said.

Flambeau crossed his arms and smiled with interest.

“Then this should be entertaining,” he said.

Father Brown began walking calmly toward the dining room door. Mr. Audley and Flambeau followed him.

Inside the dining room the members of the Twelve True Fishermen were still enjoying their dinner. They sat in a long line at the table. Their blue fisherman decorations hung on the walls, and silver dishes shone under the bright lights.

Several waiters moved quietly through the room carrying food.

Father Brown stepped inside.

At first no one noticed him. The guests continued talking loudly.

But Mr. Audley quickly raised his voice.

“Gentlemen,” he said nervously, “please excuse the interruption.”

The conversation stopped.

Several members looked annoyed.

One large man spoke impatiently.

“What is it, Audley?”

Mr. Audley hesitated.

Father Brown stepped forward.

“I believe I can help you find your missing spoons,” he said quietly.

The members exchanged surprised looks.

One man laughed.

“And who are you?” he asked.

“My name is Father Brown,” the priest replied calmly.

Another member leaned forward.

“Then tell us,” he said. “Who stole them?”

Father Brown looked slowly along the line of guests.

Then he spoke very simply.

“One of you.”

The room became silent.

Several men laughed angrily.

“That is ridiculous!” one of them said.

Father Brown remained calm.

“It is not ridiculous,” he said. “It is only unexpected.”

He walked slowly along the side of the table.

“A servant could not steal the spoons easily,” he continued. “The servants are watched carefully. They carry plates and food. They do not have time to hide silver.”

He stopped and looked at the guests.

“But a guest has a better opportunity.”

One of the men spoke sharply.

“How?”

Father Brown answered calmly.

“By pretending to be a servant.”

Flambeau watched the faces around the table carefully.

Father Brown continued.

“A guest could leave his chair quietly. He could walk slowly along the room as if he were carrying food. Then he could return quickly like a waiter going back to the kitchen.”

He paused.

“I heard the footsteps.”

Several men looked uneasy.

Father Brown turned suddenly toward one of them.

The man was thin and nervous. His hands rested tightly on the table.

“You walked twice,” Father Brown said quietly.

The man’s face turned pale.

“I—I do not understand,” he said.

Father Brown spoke gently.

“You walked like a guest when you arrived,” he said. “But later you walked like a waiter.”

The man suddenly stood up.

“This is nonsense!” he cried.

Flambeau moved quickly and blocked the door.

“Perhaps,” he said calmly. “But you should still sit down.”

The man looked around desperately.

Father Brown spoke softly.

“You hid the spoons in your coat.”

For a moment the man stood frozen.

Then his shoulders dropped.

Slowly he reached into his coat.

A small bundle of silver spoons appeared in his hand.

The room filled with shocked voices.

Mr. Audley took the spoons quickly.

“This is unbelievable,” he said.

The thief sat down heavily in his chair.

Father Brown looked at him with quiet sympathy.

“You were desperate,” the priest said gently.

The man said nothing.

Flambeau turned to Father Brown with admiration.

“You solved the mystery by listening to footsteps,” he said.

Father Brown shook his head.

“Not only footsteps,” he said.

Flambeau smiled.

“What else?”

Father Brown answered quietly.

“Human nature.”

The strange case of the queer feet was finished.

## The Flying Stars

### Part 1

Christmas was approaching, and a great house in the English countryside was full of light and laughter. Snow lay softly across the fields, and the trees were covered with white frost. Inside the house a large party had gathered for the holiday.

The house belonged to a wealthy man named Sir Leopold Fischer. He was a rich banker and a famous collector of valuable things. His house contained many rare objects from different countries.

But one object was especially admired by visitors.

It was a necklace of beautiful jewels shaped like small stars. Each star shone with bright diamonds and deep blue stones. When the light touched them, the jewels seemed almost to fly through the air.

Because of this, people called them the Flying Stars.

Sir Leopold's daughter, Rachel Fischer, often wore the necklace during special occasions. On this Christmas evening she wore it again.

Rachel Fischer was young and lively. Her eyes shone with excitement as the guests gathered in the warm hall of the house.

Among the visitors that evening was Father Brown.

The small priest had been invited by a friend who knew Sir Leopold. As usual Father Brown seemed quiet and ordinary. He stood near the fireplace warming his hands while watching the cheerful party.

Children ran through the hall laughing. Servants carried trays of food and drinks. Guests spoke happily about the holiday.

But not everyone in the room was thinking about Christmas.

Two men stood quietly near a tall window.

One of them was a tall man with dark hair and a confident smile.

It was Flambeau.

The other man was smaller and thinner. His sharp eyes moved constantly

around the room.

Flambeau spoke quietly.

“You see the necklace?” he asked.

The thin man nodded.

“Those jewels must be worth a fortune.”

Flambeau smiled slightly.

“Yes,” he said. “And tonight the house is full of confusion. Music, children, laughter... the perfect moment for a clever thief.”

The thin man looked uncertain.

“But there are many people here,” he said.

Flambeau shrugged.

“Sometimes many people make a crime easier, not harder.”

Across the room Father Brown was speaking with Sir Leopold.

“Your house is very beautiful,” the priest said kindly.

Sir Leopold laughed.

“Yes, but it can also be dangerous,” he replied.

Father Brown raised his eyebrows.

“Dangerous?”

Sir Leopold pointed toward the necklace around his daughter’s neck.

“Those jewels attract attention,” he said. “Sometimes the wrong kind of attention.”

Father Brown looked at the shining stars.

“Yes,” he said softly. “Very bright things often do.”

Just then the door opened and several children ran into the room. They were playing a Christmas game.

“Let’s turn off the lights!” one child shouted.

Another child laughed.

“Yes! A dark game!”

Before the adults could stop them, one of the children ran to the wall and pulled a switch.

The great hall suddenly became dark.

Voices filled the room.  
People laughed and called to each other.  
In the darkness someone moved quickly.  
A moment later the lights returned.  
Everyone blinked in the bright room.  
Then Rachel Fischer suddenly cried out.  
Her hands flew to her neck.  
The necklace was gone.  
The Flying Stars had disappeared.

## Part 2

For a moment the hall was completely silent.  
Rachel Fischer stood in the center of the room with her hands still raised to her neck.  
“My necklace!” she cried. “The Flying Stars are gone!”  
Sir Leopold hurried toward her.  
“What happened?” he asked sharply.  
Rachel shook her head.  
“The lights went out,” she said. “And when they came back... the necklace was gone.”  
The guests began speaking loudly all at once. Some looked shocked, others confused.  
Sir Leopold raised his hand.  
“Everyone please remain calm,” he said firmly.  
He turned to one of the servants.  
“Close all the doors,” he ordered. “No one leaves the house.”  
The servant hurried away.  
Father Brown stood quietly beside the fireplace watching the room.  
Across the hall Flambeau also stood silently near the window. His expression showed interest rather than surprise.

Sir Leopold spoke again.

“The necklace is extremely valuable,” he said. “But more important than that, it belongs to my family. I must ask everyone to remain until we understand what has happened.”

One guest laughed nervously.

“Surely someone is playing a Christmas joke,” he said.

But Rachel shook her head.

“No,” she said quietly. “I felt the clasp open.”

Father Brown slowly walked toward the center of the hall.

“May I ask something?” he said gently.

Sir Leopold nodded.

“Of course, Father.”

Father Brown looked at the children.

“Who turned off the lights?” he asked.

A small boy raised his hand nervously.

“I did,” he said.

Father Brown smiled kindly.

“Thank you.”

He then looked slowly around the room.

The guests stood in small groups speaking quietly. The servants waited near the doors.

Flambeau watched everything carefully.

Father Brown turned to Sir Leopold.

“The thief must still be here,” he said.

Sir Leopold nodded.

“That seems clear.”

Father Brown walked toward the tall window and looked outside.

Snow covered the garden beyond the house. The night was cold and quiet.

He returned slowly to the center of the room.

Flambeau approached him.

“Do you see anything interesting?” he asked softly.

Father Brown nodded slightly.

“Yes,” he said.

Flambeau smiled.

“Then you believe you know what happened?”

Father Brown answered quietly.

“I believe the jewels did not disappear.”

Flambeau looked surprised.

“What do you mean?”

Father Brown pointed gently toward the children.

“When the lights went out,” he said, “everyone moved a little.”

He paused.

“But only one person moved for a purpose.”

Flambeau’s eyes narrowed.

“And that person?”

Father Brown smiled faintly.

“I think,” he said softly, “we will discover that very soon.”

At that moment a servant rushed into the hall from another room.

He looked frightened.

“Sir!” he cried. “Someone has opened the back door!”

Everyone turned toward the hallway.

And suddenly the mystery of the Flying Stars became even deeper.

### Part 3

Everyone in the hall turned toward the frightened servant.

Sir Leopold stepped forward.

“The back door?” he said sharply. “Was it locked?”

“Yes, sir,” the servant replied. “But now it is open.”

Several guests began speaking anxiously.

“The thief escaped!”

“The jewels are gone!”

But Father Brown did not move.  
He looked quietly around the room.  
Flambeau stood beside him, watching closely.  
“Well?” Flambeau asked softly.  
Father Brown shook his head.  
“No one escaped,” he said.  
Sir Leopold looked puzzled.  
“But the door—”  
Father Brown raised a hand gently.  
“The door is only part of the trick.”  
He turned toward the guests.  
“The jewels are not outside,” he said calmly. “They are still here.”  
The room became silent again.  
Flambeau smiled slightly.  
“Then someone in this room has them.”  
Father Brown nodded.  
“Yes.”  
Sir Leopold looked at his guests one by one.  
“Father,” he said slowly, “please explain.”  
Father Brown spoke quietly, as if he were describing something very simple.  
“When the lights went out, everyone moved a little,” he said. “Some people laughed. Some people spoke. But one person used the darkness for a very careful action.”  
Rachel Fischer listened closely.  
Father Brown continued.  
“The thief opened the clasp of the necklace and removed the jewels. But he could not escape immediately. Too many people were here.”  
He paused.  
“So he threw them.”  
Several guests looked confused.  
“Threw them?” one man repeated.

Father Brown pointed toward the tall Christmas tree in the corner of the hall.

“Yes,” he said.

Everyone looked at the tree.

The branches were covered with shining decorations and small lights.

Father Brown walked slowly toward it.

He reached into the branches.

A moment later he pulled something out.

The Flying Stars sparkled in his hand.

Rachel gasped.

Sir Leopold stepped forward in amazement.

“In the tree!”

Father Brown nodded.

“In the darkness the jewels were thrown among the decorations,” he said. “No one would notice them there.”

Flambeau laughed quietly.

“A clever hiding place.”

Father Brown turned slowly.

His eyes rested on the thin man who had earlier stood beside Flambeau near the window.

The man’s face had become pale.

Father Brown spoke gently.

“You planned to return later and collect them,” he said.

The man said nothing.

But his silence was answer enough.

Sir Leopold called the servants.

The thief was quickly held.

Rachel took the necklace back with relief.

The hall slowly filled again with voices, but now they were voices of amazement rather than fear.

Flambeau walked beside Father Brown toward the fireplace.

“You noticed the tree immediately,” he said.

Father Brown shook his head.

“Not the tree,” he replied.

Flambeau looked curious.

“Then what?”

Father Brown answered quietly.

“The thief.”

Flambeau smiled.

“How?”

Father Brown looked at the bright jewels in Rachel’s hands.

“Because he looked at them too much,” he said.

And the strange mystery of the Flying Stars was finished.

## The Invisible Man

### Part 1

In a quiet street in London stood a small and comfortable house. The street was peaceful, with rows of similar houses and small gardens in front of each door. People passed through the street every day, but nothing unusual ever seemed to happen there.

One afternoon Father Brown walked slowly along this street with Flambeau beside him.

The two men had become friends over time. Flambeau, who had once been a famous criminal, now spent much of his life helping Father Brown in strange investigations.

On this day they had come to visit a man named Mr. Smythe.

Mr. Smythe was a doctor who lived in the quiet house halfway down the street. Recently something very strange had happened there.

As they approached the house, they saw a small group of people standing outside the door.

One of them was a police officer.

Another was a nervous young woman who seemed deeply worried.

The officer noticed Father Brown and Flambeau and greeted them politely.

“Good afternoon, Father,” he said.

“Good afternoon,” Father Brown replied.

Flambeau looked toward the house.

“Something serious has happened?” he asked.

The officer nodded.

“A murder,” he said.

Flambeau raised his eyebrows.

“Here?”

“Yes,” the officer said. “Dr. Smythe was killed this morning.”

The young woman suddenly spoke.

“But no one saw the killer,” she said.

Father Brown looked at her gently.

“Who are you?” he asked.

“I am Mary,” she said quietly. “I work in the house.”

Flambeau spoke next.

“Tell us what happened.”

Mary took a deep breath.

“This morning the doctor was in his study,” she explained. “I was in the kitchen. The postman came to the door with letters. The milkman also came a few minutes later.”

She paused nervously.

“And the newspaper boy.”

Flambeau nodded.

“That sounds normal.”

Mary continued.

“But when I went to the study later... the doctor was dead.”

The police officer spoke.

“He was stabbed with a knife,” he said.

Flambeau looked thoughtful.

“Then the killer must have entered the house.”

The officer shook his head.

“That is the strange thing. No one entered the house.”

Flambeau frowned.

“Impossible.”

The officer shrugged.

“Three men came to the door,” he said. “The postman, the milkman, and the newspaper boy. But none of them entered.”

Father Brown looked thoughtful.

“And no one else came?”

“No,” the officer said.

Flambeau laughed quietly.

“Then the killer must be invisible.”

The officer sighed.

“Some people are beginning to say exactly that.”

Father Brown shook his head gently.

“No,” he said.

Flambeau looked at him.

“Why not?”

Father Brown answered calmly.

“Because invisible men do not exist.”

He looked toward the quiet house.

“But men whom nobody notices do exist.”

Flambeau’s eyes brightened.

“Ah,” he said slowly.

Father Brown opened the door and stepped inside.

The mystery of the invisible man had begun.

## Part 2

Father Brown entered the house quietly. Flambeau and the police officer followed him. The young woman, Mary, came in behind them and closed the door.

The house was calm and ordinary. A small hallway led to several rooms. Nothing seemed strange or disturbed.

The officer pointed toward a door on the left.

“The doctor’s study is here,” he said.

They entered the room.

The study was comfortable and neat. Books filled the shelves along the walls. Papers were arranged carefully on the desk.

But near the desk, on the floor, lay the body of Dr. Smythe.

He had fallen backward, one hand still resting against the chair beside him.

Flambeau looked down at the body with a serious expression.

“A knife,” he said.

The officer nodded.

“Yes. A single wound.”

Father Brown knelt beside the body and examined the room quietly.

After a moment he stood again.

“The doctor was working,” he said.

The officer looked at the desk.

“Yes. He was writing letters.”

Flambeau walked slowly around the room.

“There are no signs of a struggle,” he said.

“None,” the officer agreed.

Father Brown looked toward the window.

“The window was closed?”

“Yes.”

“And the door?”

“Also closed.”

Flambeau shook his head.

“Then the killer must have been invited into the room.”

The officer spoke again.

“But the maid says no visitor entered the house.”

Father Brown looked thoughtful.

“Tell me again about the people who came to the door,” he said.

Mary spoke nervously.

“First the postman came,” she said. “He delivered letters.”

“Then?”

“The milkman.”

“And after that?”

“The newspaper boy.”

Father Brown nodded slowly.

“Three men came to the door,” he repeated.

Flambeau crossed his arms.

“And none of them entered the house?”

Mary shook her head.

“No.”

Father Brown walked slowly to the front door and opened it.

The quiet street lay outside.

He looked at the path leading from the gate to the door.

“Many people walk this path every day,” he said.

Flambeau nodded.

“Yes.”

Father Brown turned back toward the room.

“But some people walk it so often that we stop seeing them.”

Flambeau looked puzzled.

“What do you mean?”

Father Brown spoke quietly.

“People like the postman.”

He paused.

“Or the milkman.”

He paused again.

“Or the newspaper boy.”

Flambeau’s eyes widened.

“You think one of them is the killer.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

The officer looked uncertain.

“But those men come here every day.”

Father Brown smiled gently.

“Exactly,” he said.

He turned back toward the quiet street.

“That is why they are invisible.”

### Part 3

Father Brown stood quietly near the open door, looking out at the peaceful street. Snow had begun to fall lightly, and the sound of the city seemed far away.

Flambeau walked slowly toward him.

“You believe the murderer is one of the men who comes here every day,” he said.

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

The police officer spoke.

“But those men are ordinary workers. The postman, the milkman, the newspaper boy. Why would one of them kill the doctor?”

Father Brown closed the door gently and turned back into the room.

“Because the doctor was afraid,” he said quietly.

Flambeau looked surprised.

“Afraid?”

Father Brown walked toward the desk where Dr. Smythe had been writing.

“Yes,” he said. “You can see it in the letters he was writing.”

The police officer looked down at the papers.

“These letters are unfinished,” he said.

Father Brown nodded.

“He was asking for help.”

Flambeau leaned over the desk.

“From whom?”

Father Brown answered simply.

“From the police.”

The officer looked surprised.

“Why would he do that?”

Father Brown spoke calmly.

“Because someone was threatening him.”

Flambeau crossed his arms thoughtfully.

“Then the killer must have known about the letters.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

The officer frowned.

“But if the murderer was a stranger, the maid would have noticed him.”

Father Brown smiled faintly.

“That is exactly the point.”

He looked toward the window again.

“The murderer was not a stranger.”

Flambeau’s voice became quiet.

“He was someone who belonged here.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes. Someone who could walk up to the door without anyone asking questions.”

The officer suddenly understood.

“One of the delivery men.”

Father Brown continued.

“Think about it. The milkman comes every morning. No one watches him carefully. The newspaper boy arrives every day. No one wonders why he is there.”

He paused.

“But one of these men came today with a different purpose.”

Flambeau looked toward the street outside.

“Which one?”

Father Brown spoke softly.

“The postman.”

The officer stared.

“The postman?”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes. Because he had the best excuse to enter the house.”

Flambeau smiled slowly.

“Letters must be handed to someone inside.”

Father Brown continued.

“Exactly. The doctor would open the door for him. The postman could step

inside without suspicion.”

The officer spoke quickly.

“And once inside...”

Father Brown finished the sentence.

“...he could go to the study.”

The room fell silent.

Flambeau laughed quietly.

“The invisible man,” he said.

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes. Invisible because no one thinks about him.”

The police officer quickly reached for his hat.

“Then we must find that postman.”

Father Brown spoke calmly.

“You will find him easily.”

The officer stopped.

“Why?”

Father Brown smiled gently.

“Because men who try to become invisible,” he said, “often forget that someone is still watching.”

## The Honour of Israel Gow

### Part 1

Far to the north of England, in the wild hills of Scotland, stood a lonely old castle. The land around it was rough and empty. Grey rocks rose from the ground, and strong winds blew across the hills.

The castle itself was dark and ancient. Its tall towers looked out over the empty countryside, and its windows seemed to watch the silent valleys below.

For many years the castle had belonged to the strange and mysterious Earl of Glengyle.

The Earl was known as a very unusual man. He lived alone and rarely spoke to anyone. Most of the people in the nearby villages believed he was hiding something dark.

Some said he studied strange books.

Others said he practiced strange religions.

But no one knew the truth.

One cold morning news spread across the hills.

The Earl of Glengyle had died.

Soon several men arrived at the castle to examine the situation. Among them were Father Brown and Flambeau.

They had been invited by a local official who wished to understand the strange rumors surrounding the Earl.

When they reached the castle, the wind was blowing strongly across the hilltop. The sky was grey and heavy with clouds.

A tall, silent man opened the great wooden door.

He had a long beard and rough clothes.

This man was Israel Gow, the Earl's servant.

Israel Gow said almost nothing. He simply stepped aside and allowed the visitors to enter.

Inside the castle the air felt cold and still.

The halls were dark. Old paintings hung on the walls, and heavy furniture stood in silent rows.

Flambeau looked around with curiosity.

“A cheerful place,” he said quietly.

Father Brown smiled slightly.

“Lonely places often appear frightening,” he said.

Another visitor was already waiting in the main hall. He was a local lawyer who had come to manage the Earl’s estate.

The lawyer greeted them nervously.

“Thank you for coming,” he said. “There are some... unusual matters here.”

Flambeau raised an eyebrow.

“Unusual in what way?”

The lawyer hesitated.

“When we examined the Earl’s rooms,” he said slowly, “we discovered several strange things.”

Father Brown listened quietly.

“What kind of things?” he asked.

The lawyer answered.

“Jewels that had been removed from their settings.”

Flambeau frowned.

“Removed?”

“Yes,” the lawyer said. “The jewels were lying loose in a box. But the gold settings were gone.”

Flambeau looked puzzled.

“That is very strange.”

The lawyer continued.

“We also found piles of snuff, broken pieces of candle, and other objects that seem to have no purpose.”

Flambeau laughed softly.

“This begins to sound like madness.”

Father Brown said nothing.

Instead he looked quietly toward Israel Gow, who stood silently near the door.

The strange servant showed no emotion.

Flambeau followed Father Brown's gaze.

"You think the servant knows something?" he asked.

Father Brown nodded slowly.

"Yes," he said.

Flambeau lowered his voice.

"Do you think he murdered the Earl?"

Father Brown shook his head gently.

"No," he said.

Flambeau looked surprised.

"Then what do you think?"

Father Brown answered quietly.

"I think Israel Gow is protecting something."

The wind outside struck the castle walls with a deep sound.

And the strange mystery of the Earl of Glengyle was about to begin.

## Part 2

The lawyer led Father Brown and Flambeau up a long stone staircase. Their footsteps echoed softly in the silent castle.

The wind outside pushed against the old walls, and the air inside felt cold and still.

At the top of the stairs the lawyer opened a heavy wooden door.

"This was the Earl's room," he said quietly.

They entered.

The room was large but strangely empty. Only a few pieces of furniture remained. A narrow bed stood against one wall. A table and chair stood near the window.

But the most unusual thing was the collection of objects placed carefully on the table.

Flambeau stepped closer.

On the table lay several loose jewels. They were bright and beautiful: rubies, diamonds, and emeralds.

But none of them were set in rings or necklaces.

They had been removed from their gold settings.

Beside the jewels were small piles of dark brown powder.

“Snuff,” the lawyer explained.

Flambeau looked confused.

“Why would someone collect piles of snuff?” he asked.

The lawyer shook his head.

“We do not know.”

Father Brown examined the table quietly.

“And the gold settings?” he asked.

“They are missing,” the lawyer replied.

Flambeau crossed his arms.

“So someone removed the jewels and took the gold,” he said. “That sounds like theft.”

The lawyer nodded nervously.

“That is what we first believed.”

Father Brown looked around the room.

“But you are no longer certain?”

The lawyer hesitated.

“There are other strange objects,” he said.

He opened a small wooden box.

Inside lay several short pieces of candle.

Flambeau looked puzzled.

“Broken candles?”

The lawyer nodded.

“Yes. The Earl seemed to collect them.”

Flambeau laughed quietly.

“Jewels without gold, piles of snuff, and broken candles,” he said. “This Earl

must have been completely mad.”

Father Brown did not laugh.

Instead he walked slowly to the window and looked out across the grey hills.

“Madness is possible,” he said gently.

He turned back toward the table.

“But there is another possibility.”

Flambeau raised an eyebrow.

“Which is?”

Father Brown spoke quietly.

“Someone is misunderstanding the objects.”

Flambeau looked at the table again.

“They seem clear enough to me.”

Father Brown smiled slightly.

“Appearances can be misleading.”

At that moment Israel Gow entered the room silently.

He stood near the door with his hands behind his back.

His face showed no expression.

Flambeau studied him carefully.

“This man served the Earl for many years,” he said.

The lawyer nodded.

“Yes. Israel Gow has been here longer than anyone.”

Father Brown looked at the silent servant.

“Did the Earl ask you to collect these objects?” he asked gently.

Israel Gow said nothing.

He simply looked at the floor.

Flambeau spoke again.

“Perhaps he cannot explain,” he said quietly.

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes,” he said softly.

He looked once more at the strange collection of jewels, snuff, and candles.

Then he spoke calmly.

“I believe these objects are not signs of madness,” he said.

Flambeau looked surprised.

“Then what are they?”

Father Brown answered quietly.

“They are signs of honour.”

And suddenly the strange behavior of Israel Gow began to make sense.

### Part 3

Flambeau stared at Father Brown with surprise.

“Honour?” he said. “Jewels without gold, piles of snuff, and broken candles look more like madness than honour.”

Father Brown walked slowly toward the table again. He picked up one of the loose jewels and held it carefully in the light.

“These jewels are valuable,” he said.

Flambeau nodded.

“Very valuable.”

Father Brown set the jewel down again.

“But the gold settings were even more valuable to a thief,” he said.

The lawyer looked puzzled.

“Then someone stole the gold?”

Father Brown shook his head gently.

“No. Someone removed the gold so that no one would steal the jewels.”

Flambeau frowned.

“That makes little sense.”

Father Brown looked toward the silent servant.

“Israel Gow was protecting the Earl’s treasures,” he said.

The lawyer turned to the servant.

“But why remove the gold?”

Father Brown answered.

“Because gold attracts thieves.”

He paused.

“Loose jewels are harder to sell. A thief prefers rings, necklaces, and ornaments that can be sold easily.”

Flambeau nodded slowly.

“That is true.”

Father Brown continued.

“So Israel Gow removed the gold and hid it.”

The lawyer looked surprised.

“You believe the servant was protecting the Earl’s property?”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

Flambeau looked again at the piles of brown powder.

“And the snuff?” he asked.

Father Brown smiled faintly.

“The Earl used snuff every day,” he said. “Israel Gow carefully gathered what remained after the Earl’s death.”

Flambeau raised his eyebrows.

“Why would anyone do that?”

Father Brown spoke gently.

“Because he respected his master.”

The room became quiet.

Father Brown picked up one of the small pieces of candle.

“And these,” he continued, “are pieces of candles that burned beside the Earl while he worked.”

The lawyer looked thoughtful.

“So Israel Gow saved them as memories.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

Flambeau looked toward the silent servant again.

Israel Gow still stood quietly near the door.

His rough hands rested calmly behind his back.

“Then he was not stealing anything,” Flambeau said.

Father Brown shook his head.

“No.”

The lawyer suddenly laughed with relief.

“So the strange objects were not signs of madness after all.”

Father Brown spoke softly.

“No. They were signs of loyalty.”

Flambeau walked toward the servant.

“You loved the Earl,” he said quietly.

Israel Gow did not speak.

But his eyes lifted for a moment.

And in that moment everyone understood.

The strange mystery of the castle had not been a story of crime.

It had been a story of honour.

## The Wrong Shape

### Part 1

In a quiet house near London lived a man named Professor Leonard Wilton. He was a poet and a scholar who spent most of his time reading and writing.

Professor Wilton was known for his strange ideas. He loved old books about magic, mystery, and ancient religions. Some people believed he understood deep secrets of the world.

Others believed he simply enjoyed strange stories.

One evening Father Brown came to visit the professor.

The small house stood beside a quiet garden. When Father Brown arrived, the sky was already dark, and the lamps inside the house were glowing softly.

Flambeau was also there.

He had arrived earlier and now sat comfortably in a chair beside the fireplace.

“Good evening, Father,” he said with a smile.

Father Brown nodded.

“Good evening.”

Professor Wilton stood near the window, holding a book in one hand.

He was a tall man with thin hands and thoughtful eyes.

“Father Brown,” he said politely, “I am glad you came.”

“Thank you for inviting me,” the priest replied.

The professor placed the book on the table.

“We were discussing a curious matter,” he said.

Flambeau leaned forward.

“A murder,” he said.

Father Brown looked surprised.

“Here?”

Flambeau nodded.

“Earlier today.”

Professor Wilton spoke quietly.

“A man named Mr. Ross was found dead in this house.”

Father Brown sat down slowly.

“How did he die?” he asked.

Flambeau answered.

“With a knife.”

He pointed toward a table beside the wall.

On the table lay a curved knife with a dark handle.

“An unusual knife,” Flambeau said.

Professor Wilton nodded.

“It comes from the East,” he explained. “Some people believe it has magical power.”

Flambeau laughed quietly.

“Magical power rarely kills anyone,” he said.

Father Brown looked at the knife carefully.

“Who found the body?” he asked.

Professor Wilton answered.

“My secretary.”

Flambeau added another detail.

“The strange thing is this: the dead man had been threatening the professor.”

Father Brown looked thoughtful.

“Threatening him?”

Professor Wilton nodded.

“Yes. He believed I had stolen something from him.”

Father Brown studied the room quietly.

The house was calm and peaceful. Books lined the walls. Papers lay neatly on the desk.

Nothing looked violent or dangerous.

Flambeau spoke again.

“There is another strange detail,” he said.

Father Brown looked at him.

“What is that?”

Flambeau pointed toward the knife.

“The wound on the body does not match the shape of this blade.”

Father Brown leaned forward.

“It does not?”

Flambeau shook his head.

“No. The wound is straight. But the blade is curved.”

Father Brown nodded slowly.

“Ah,” he said.

Professor Wilton looked confused.

“Does that matter?”

Father Brown smiled gently.

“Yes,” he said.

He looked again at the curved knife on the table.

“It matters very much.”

The mystery of the wrong shape had begun.

## Part 2

Father Brown continued to look at the curved knife on the table. The fire in the fireplace burned quietly, and the room felt calm despite the terrible event that had happened earlier that day.

Flambeau stood beside the table and crossed his arms.

“The wound was straight,” he repeated. “But the blade is curved.”

Professor Wilton looked uneasy.

“Perhaps the doctor made a mistake,” he said. “Perhaps the wound only appeared straight.”

Flambeau shook his head.

“The doctor is very certain.”

Father Brown spoke quietly.

“Then the knife on the table is not the weapon.”

The professor looked surprised.

“But it was found beside the body.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes. That is exactly why it was placed there.”

Flambeau looked interested.

“You mean someone placed it there on purpose?”

Father Brown answered calmly.

“Yes.”

The professor looked troubled.

“But why would anyone do that?”

Father Brown walked slowly around the room.

“Because the knife looks strange,” he said. “People immediately notice it.”

He paused.

“It comes from the East. It looks mysterious and dangerous.”

Flambeau nodded slowly.

“So people will think the crime is mysterious.”

Father Brown smiled faintly.

“Exactly.”

The professor sat down heavily in his chair.

“But the man who died was my enemy,” he said. “Everyone knows that.”

Father Brown looked at him gently.

“Yes. That is also important.”

Flambeau suddenly understood.

“Someone wanted the murder to look like revenge.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

The room fell silent again.

Outside the wind moved through the garden trees.

Flambeau spoke slowly.

“But if this knife is not the weapon... then where is the real weapon?”

Father Brown looked toward the fireplace.

He walked closer and studied the iron tools beside the fire.

After a moment he bent down and lifted one of them.

It was a long metal poker used to move the burning wood.

Father Brown held it quietly in his hand.

“This is straight,” he said.

Flambeau stared.

“You think this was used?”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

The professor suddenly stood up.

“That is impossible,” he said quickly.

Father Brown looked at him calmly.

“Why?”

The professor hesitated.

“Because... because that tool never left the fireplace.”

Flambeau looked carefully at the man’s face.

“You seem very certain.”

Father Brown placed the poker back beside the fire.

“The real weapon may be gone now,” he said quietly.

Flambeau looked thoughtful.

“Then the mystery remains.”

Father Brown shook his head gently.

“No,” he said.

He turned slowly toward Professor Wilton.

“The mystery is almost solved.”

And the quiet room suddenly felt much more dangerous.

### Part 3

The room became very quiet after Father Brown spoke. The fire moved softly in the fireplace, and the shadows of the furniture stretched across the walls.

Professor Wilton stood beside his chair, looking pale.

Flambeau watched him carefully.

“Father Brown believes the mystery is almost solved,” Flambeau said slowly.

“That is interesting.”

The professor forced a small smile.

“I do not see how it could be solved,” he said. “The weapon is missing. The crime happened earlier today. Many people were in the house.”

Father Brown nodded calmly.

“Yes,” he said. “And yet the solution is simple.”

Flambeau leaned back against the table.

“Let us hear it.”

Father Brown spoke quietly.

“The curved knife was placed beside the body to create a story.”

Professor Wilton looked uneasy again.

“A story?”

“Yes,” Father Brown said. “A mysterious story about magic, strange religions, and Eastern weapons.”

He paused.

“But the real crime was much simpler.”

Flambeau nodded.

“A straight wound from a straight blade.”

Father Brown continued.

“And a weapon that could easily disappear.”

Professor Wilton’s voice became tense.

“You speak as if you know the killer.”

Father Brown answered gently.

“Yes.”

The room fell silent again.

Flambeau spoke softly.

“Who is it?”

Father Brown looked directly at Professor Wilton.

“The killer is the man who created the strange story.”

The professor stepped backward.

“This is absurd.”

Father Brown continued calmly.

“You study strange religions. You speak about magic and mysterious powers.”

He looked toward the curved knife.

“You knew that people would believe such a story.”

Flambeau watched the professor carefully.

“And you had a reason to hate the dead man,” he added.

Professor Wilton’s hands trembled.

“He threatened me,” he said weakly.

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes. That is true.”

He spoke gently.

“But you killed him before he could destroy your reputation.”

The professor suddenly sank into his chair.

For a moment no one spoke.

Finally he whispered,

“How did you know?”

Father Brown answered simply.

“Because the knife was the wrong shape.”

Flambeau smiled quietly.

“A simple mistake,” he said.

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes. A man who invents a complicated story often forgets the simplest detail.”

Outside the wind moved softly through the trees.

And the strange mystery of the wrong shape had finally been solved.

## The Sins of Prince Saradine

### Part 1

One warm afternoon Father Brown and Flambeau were walking beside the sea in a quiet town in southern Europe. The sky was bright blue, and the water shone under the sunlight.

The town was famous for its beautiful harbor. White houses stood along the hills, and narrow streets led down to the sea.

Flambeau enjoyed the peaceful view.

“It is strange,” he said, “how many mysteries we meet in quiet places.”

Father Brown smiled gently.

“Mysteries follow people,” he said. “Not places.”

As they walked along the harbor road, a man hurried toward them.

He was tall and thin, with dark hair and anxious eyes.

“Father Brown!” he called.

Father Brown stopped.

“Good afternoon,” he said politely.

The man spoke quickly.

“You must help us. Something terrible has happened.”

Flambeau looked interested.

“Another murder?”

The man nodded.

“Yes.”

He lowered his voice.

“It concerns Prince Saradine.”

Flambeau raised his eyebrows.

“A prince?”

The man nodded again.

“Prince Saradine lives in a large house above the harbor. He is very rich and very powerful.”

Father Brown listened quietly.

“And what has happened?”

The man answered.

“His secretary has been killed.”

Flambeau spoke calmly.

“Inside the prince’s house?”

“Yes.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Then we should go there.”

The man led them up a steep road that climbed above the harbor.

At the top of the hill stood a large white house with tall windows and wide balconies.

The sea stretched far below it.

Several men were waiting outside the door.

Among them stood a tall man with elegant clothes and a proud face.

This was Prince Saradine.

The prince greeted Father Brown politely.

“Thank you for coming,” he said.

Father Brown bowed slightly.

“I am sorry for the trouble in your house.”

Prince Saradine spoke calmly.

“My secretary was found dead this morning.”

Flambeau looked toward the house.

“How did he die?”

The prince answered quietly.

“He was shot.”

Father Brown looked thoughtful.

“And who discovered the body?”

The prince replied.

“My cousin.”

At that moment another man stepped forward.

He had sharp eyes and a nervous expression.

“I found him in the study,” he said quickly.

Flambeau looked around.

“Were there any witnesses?”

The prince shook his head.

“No.”

Father Brown spoke gently.

“Then we must examine the room.”

Prince Saradine led them inside the house.

The rooms were beautiful and filled with expensive furniture.

But the air felt heavy and tense.

When they entered the study, they saw the body lying on the floor near a large desk.

Flambeau examined the room carefully.

“This will be an interesting case,” he said quietly.

Father Brown looked at the dead man and then slowly around the room.

“Yes,” he said softly.

“Very interesting indeed.”

## Part 2

The study of Prince Saradine’s house was large and bright. Tall windows looked out toward the blue sea below the hill.

But inside the room the atmosphere felt heavy and uneasy.

The body of the secretary lay beside the desk.

A small pistol rested on the floor not far from his hand.

Flambeau bent down and examined the weapon.

“A single shot,” he said.

Prince Saradine stood near the window, looking out toward the sea.

“Yes,” he said calmly. “The sound of the shot brought several people running.”

Father Brown looked at him.

“Including you?”

The prince nodded.

“Yes.”

Another man stood in the room with them.

This was the cousin who had discovered the body earlier.

He seemed nervous and restless.

Flambeau spoke to him.

“You were the first to see the body?”

The cousin nodded quickly.

“Yes. I entered the room and found him lying there.”

Father Brown looked carefully at the desk.

Several papers were scattered across it.

“Was the secretary working here this morning?” he asked.

Prince Saradine answered.

“Yes. He was organizing my business papers.”

Flambeau studied the body again.

“And the pistol?” he asked.

The cousin spoke nervously.

“It must have been his.”

Father Brown raised his eyebrows slightly.

“Must have been?”

The cousin hesitated.

“I mean... it was lying near his hand.”

Flambeau stood up slowly.

“Then the police might say this was suicide.”

The prince turned from the window.

“That would be the easiest explanation,” he said.

Father Brown looked thoughtful.

“Perhaps too easy.”

The cousin looked alarmed.

“What do you mean?”

Father Brown walked slowly around the desk.

“A man who plans to kill himself usually leaves some explanation.”

He looked at the scattered papers.

“But these papers contain only business notes.”

Flambeau nodded.

“That is true.”

Father Brown continued quietly.

“Also, the pistol lies in a strange position.”

The cousin stared at the weapon.

“Strange?”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes. It lies too far from the hand.”

Flambeau smiled faintly.

“As if someone placed it there.”

The cousin’s face turned pale.

Prince Saradine spoke calmly.

“You believe this was murder.”

Father Brown answered quietly.

“Yes.”

The room became silent.

Outside the sea wind moved across the hillside.

Flambeau looked slowly at the two men in the room.

“Then the question is simple,” he said.

“Which of you fired the gun?”

Father Brown lowered his eyes for a moment.

“And which of you,” he said softly, “is hiding a deeper sin?”

### Part 3

The room remained silent after Father Brown spoke. The sea wind moved faintly through the open window, and the curtains lifted gently.

Prince Saradine stood calmly beside the window.

His cousin, however, looked increasingly nervous.

Flambeau watched both men carefully.

“If this is murder,” he said slowly, “then someone in this house must be responsible.”

The cousin spoke quickly.

“There are many servants here.”

Flambeau shook his head.

“But the servants did not come to this room.”

Prince Saradine turned from the window.

“My cousin is correct,” he said calmly. “Several servants were nearby.”

Father Brown looked quietly at the body on the floor.

“Yet the pistol lies in the wrong place,” he said.

The cousin swallowed nervously.

“Perhaps the dying man moved his hand.”

Father Brown shook his head gently.

“No.”

Flambeau spoke calmly.

“Then someone placed the pistol there.”

The cousin’s voice trembled slightly.

“But why would anyone do that?”

Father Brown answered quietly.

“To make the death appear simple.”

He paused and then continued.

“But the truth is not simple.”

Flambeau studied the cousin’s face.

“You found the body,” he said.

The cousin nodded quickly.

“Yes.”

Father Brown looked at him gently.

“And you were the first person near the pistol.”

The cousin's face became pale.

"Are you accusing me?"

Father Brown shook his head slowly.

"No."

The cousin looked confused.

"Then what do you mean?"

Father Brown turned toward Prince Saradine.

"I mean that the cousin is not the killer."

Flambeau raised his eyebrows.

"Then the prince?"

Father Brown nodded slowly.

Prince Saradine did not move.

His expression remained calm.

"You believe I killed my own secretary," he said quietly.

Father Brown answered gently.

"Yes."

The cousin stared at the prince in shock.

"But why?"

Father Brown spoke softly.

"Because the secretary knew something."

The prince remained silent.

Father Brown continued.

"He knew about your past."

Flambeau looked at the prince carefully.

"Your sins," he said quietly.

For the first time Prince Saradine lowered his head.

The wind outside grew stronger.

And the truth of the prince's past was beginning to appear.

#### Part 4

Prince Saradine stood silently beside the window. For a moment he did not move.

The cousin looked from the prince to Father Brown in confusion.

“You cannot mean that,” he said nervously. “The prince is an honorable man.”

Father Brown spoke quietly.

“Many people appear honorable.”

The room felt heavy with tension.

Flambeau watched the prince carefully.

“Your secretary discovered something,” he said.

Prince Saradine slowly turned away from the window.

His face was pale now, though his voice remained calm.

“You believe he discovered a secret from my past.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

The cousin looked frightened.

“What secret?”

Father Brown answered gently.

“A crime committed many years ago.”

The prince closed his eyes briefly.

Flambeau spoke quietly.

“The secretary threatened to reveal it.”

Prince Saradine nodded slowly.

“Yes,” he said.

The cousin stared in disbelief.

“Then you...”

The prince raised his hand gently.

“Do not speak,” he said.

He walked slowly toward the desk where the dead man lay nearby.

“My secretary discovered documents about my past,” he said quietly.

“He believed he could control me with them.”

Father Brown listened silently.

The prince continued.

“He demanded money. More money every month.”

Flambeau nodded.

“Blackmail.”

Prince Saradine lowered his head.

“Yes.”

He looked at the body.

“This morning he threatened me again.”

The room was completely silent now.

“I lost control,” the prince said quietly.

“I took the pistol from the desk.”

The cousin stepped backward in shock.

“And you shot him.”

The prince nodded slowly.

“Yes.”

Flambeau spoke calmly.

“Then you placed the pistol near the body to make it appear like suicide.”

Prince Saradine nodded again.

“Yes.”

Father Brown looked at him with quiet sadness.

“One sin leads to another,” he said softly.

The prince did not answer.

He stood beside the desk for a long moment.

Then he spoke again.

“I will confess everything to the police.”

Flambeau nodded slowly.

“That is the only honorable choice left.”

Prince Saradine walked toward the door.

Before leaving the room he stopped and looked back at Father Brown.

“You saw the truth immediately,” he said.

Father Brown shook his head gently.

“No,” he said.

“I only saw that men often hide their sins behind pride.”

The prince left the room quietly.

Outside the sea wind continued to blow across the hill.

And the dark story of Prince Saradine had come to an end.

## The Hammer of God

### Part 1

In a quiet village in England stood a small stone church. The church tower rose above the trees, and the bells could be heard across the fields every Sunday morning.

Near the church stood the house of the local priest.

The village was peaceful and orderly. People knew one another well, and serious trouble rarely visited the place.

But one morning the entire village was shaken by terrible news.

A man named Colonel Bohun had been found dead.

The colonel was not loved by many people in the village. He was known for drinking too much and behaving badly.

Still, murder was something no one expected.

Father Brown arrived in the village that same afternoon.

Flambeau walked beside him as they approached the church.

“I hear the colonel had many enemies,” Flambeau said.

Father Brown nodded slowly.

“Yes. But enemies do not always become killers.”

They soon met the local priest, Reverend Wilfred Bohun.

The reverend was a tall and serious man with a thin face and intense eyes.

He greeted Father Brown politely.

“Thank you for coming,” he said.

Father Brown bowed his head slightly.

“I am sorry for your loss.”

Flambeau looked surprised.

“Your loss?”

The reverend answered quietly.

“The colonel was my brother.”

Flambeau nodded.

“I see.”

The priest led them along a narrow path behind the church.

At the end of the path stood a small stone building used for church tools.

The reverend stopped there.

“My brother’s body was found near this place,” he said.

Flambeau looked around carefully.

The ground was rough and covered with stones.

“How did he die?” he asked.

The reverend spoke slowly.

“His head was crushed by a heavy blow.”

Flambeau frowned.

“A hammer?”

The reverend nodded.

“Yes.”

Father Brown looked at the stone ground thoughtfully.

“And the hammer was found here?”

The reverend shook his head.

“No hammer has been found.”

Flambeau crossed his arms.

“So the killer carried the weapon away.”

Father Brown remained silent for a moment.

Then he looked up toward the church tower rising high above them.

The tall stone tower stood directly over the place where the body had been discovered.

Father Brown spoke quietly.

“Or perhaps the hammer came from above.”

Flambeau looked up in surprise.

“From the tower?”

Father Brown nodded slowly.

“Yes.”

He looked again at the tall church tower.

“Sometimes,” he said softly, “people believe the hammer of God has fallen.”  
The strange mystery of the village had begun.

## Part 2

Flambeau stared up at the tall church tower.

“You think the weapon fell from the tower?” he asked.

Father Brown looked calmly at the stone building above them.

“It is possible,” he said.

The Reverend Wilfred Bohun shook his head.

“No one was in the tower this morning,” he said firmly.

Flambeau smiled faintly.

“That is what every witness says in a mystery.”

Father Brown began walking slowly toward the church door.

“Let us look at the tower,” he said.

They entered the church.

The interior was quiet and cool. Sunlight passed through the colored glass windows and spread soft colors across the stone floor.

At the back of the church stood a narrow staircase that led upward inside the tower.

The three men climbed the long spiral stairs.

The air became colder as they rose higher.

Finally they reached the small room where the church bells hung.

Large ropes hung down from the bells, and dust covered the stone floor.

Flambeau looked around carefully.

“No hammer here,” he said.

Father Brown walked slowly to one of the open windows in the tower.

He looked down.

Far below, the ground near the small tool building could be seen clearly.

Flambeau joined him.

“If a heavy object fell from here,” he said, “it could certainly kill a man.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

The reverend spoke again.

“But I tell you no one came to the tower.”

Father Brown looked gently at him.

“Did you see the colonel this morning?”

The reverend hesitated.

“Yes,” he said slowly. “He was walking near the church.”

Flambeau looked curious.

“And you spoke with him?”

The reverend’s face grew tense.

“Yes.”

Father Brown asked quietly,

“Was he drunk?”

The reverend nodded reluctantly.

“Yes. My brother often behaved badly.”

Flambeau spoke thoughtfully.

“Then perhaps he angered someone.”

Father Brown remained silent for a moment.

Then he looked once more out of the tower window.

The wind moved gently across the village fields.

“People often believe that heaven sends punishment,” he said softly.

Flambeau glanced at him.

“You mean the hammer of God?”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

He turned slowly toward the reverend.

“But sometimes the hammer of God,” he said gently, “is held by a human hand.”

The small room in the church tower became very quiet.

Flambeau looked from Father Brown to the Reverend Wilfred Bohun.

“A human hand,” he repeated slowly.

The reverend stood very still.

“What do you mean?” he asked.

Father Brown walked slowly across the dusty floor of the tower.

“Your brother had many faults,” he said quietly.

The reverend’s voice became tense.

“Yes. That is true.”

Father Brown continued.

“He drank too much. He insulted people. He behaved badly.”

Flambeau nodded.

“Many people disliked him.”

Father Brown looked at the reverend.

“But you disliked him more than most.”

The reverend’s face turned pale.

“He was my brother,” he said sharply.

Father Brown answered gently.

“Yes. That made it worse.”

The wind blew through the tower window.

Flambeau watched the priest carefully.

Father Brown spoke again.

“You believed your brother was a disgrace to the family.”

The reverend did not answer.

Father Brown continued quietly.

“You believed his life was sinful.”

Flambeau lowered his voice.

“And you believed punishment should come.”

The reverend suddenly spoke.

“He deserved punishment.”

The words echoed in the tower.

Father Brown nodded sadly.

“Yes. But punishment is not the same as justice.”

The reverend looked down at the stone floor.

“He insulted God with his life,” he said.

Father Brown answered softly.

“And you believed you were the hammer of God.”

Flambeau spoke quietly.

“You climbed the tower with a hammer.”

The reverend’s hands trembled slightly.

Father Brown continued.

“When your brother passed beneath the tower, you dropped the hammer.”

The room became completely silent.

The reverend closed his eyes.

“Yes,” he whispered.

Flambeau exhaled slowly.

“And afterward?”

The reverend spoke weakly.

“I hid the hammer in the fields.”

Father Brown looked at him with quiet sadness.

“You wished to believe that heaven had judged him.”

The reverend opened his eyes again.

“Yes.”

Father Brown shook his head gently.

“But heaven does not work that way.”

The wind moved softly through the tower window.

And the terrible truth about the hammer of God had finally been revealed.

## The Eye of Apollo

### Part 1

In the busy city of London stood a tall modern building filled with small apartments. Many different people lived there: students, workers, artists, and travelers from distant places.

The building was new and fashionable. It had wide windows, shining electric lights, and a large elevator that carried people quickly from floor to floor.

But despite its modern appearance, strange events had begun to happen there.

One evening Father Brown arrived at the building with Flambeau.

They had been asked to visit by a man who lived there and who believed something dangerous was happening among the residents.

As they entered the building, they saw several people standing in the hallway speaking nervously.

A tall man with bright eyes stepped forward.

“Father Brown,” he said politely. “Thank you for coming.”

Father Brown bowed his head.

“Good evening.”

Flambeau looked around with interest.

“What is the trouble here?”

The tall man lowered his voice.

“A strange religion has appeared in this building.”

Flambeau raised his eyebrows.

“Religion?”

The man nodded.

“A group that worships the sun.”

Father Brown listened quietly.

“And why is that dangerous?” he asked.

The man hesitated.

“Because their leader is a strange man named Kalón.”

Flambeau smiled slightly.

“Many strange men lead strange religions.”

The man spoke more urgently.

“But people who follow him begin to behave strangely.”

Father Brown looked thoughtful.

“In what way?”

“They begin to speak about purity and light,” the man said.

He paused.

“And about leaving the world behind.”

Flambeau frowned slightly.

“That sounds unpleasant.”

The man spoke again.

“Yesterday one of the followers died.”

Father Brown raised his head.

“Died?”

The man nodded.

“A woman named Pauline Stacey.”

Flambeau looked serious now.

“How did she die?”

The man pointed upward toward the high floors of the building.

“She fell from the roof.”

The hallway became silent.

Father Brown spoke softly.

“Did she fall... or did someone push her?”

The man shook his head slowly.

“No one knows.”

Flambeau looked toward the elevator.

“Then perhaps we should look at the roof.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

As they entered the elevator and rose toward the top of the building, Father

Brown looked thoughtful.

“Sun worship,” he said quietly.

Flambeau smiled.

“It sounds poetic.”

Father Brown shook his head gently.

“Sometimes,” he said, “people who worship light create very dark things.”

And the strange mystery of the Eye of Apollo was about to begin.

## Part 2

The elevator rose slowly through the tall building. The metal walls reflected the electric lights, and the quiet sound of the machine filled the small space.

Flambeau stood with his arms folded.

“A woman falls from the roof,” he said. “And now people speak about a strange religion.”

Father Brown nodded quietly.

“Yes.”

The tall man who had invited them spoke again.

“Her name was Pauline Stacey,” he said. “She was a very serious woman.”

Flambeau raised an eyebrow.

“Serious in what way?”

“She believed strongly in justice,” the man replied. “She often complained about dishonesty and corruption.”

Father Brown listened carefully.

“And she joined this religion?”

The man nodded.

“Yes. She became interested in the teachings of Kalón.”

Flambeau spoke thoughtfully.

“Tell us about this Kalón.”

The man hesitated.

“He is very impressive,” he said. “Tall, handsome, and confident.”

“He speaks about the sun as a symbol of truth and purity.”

Father Brown smiled faintly.

“Many religions speak about light.”

The elevator stopped at the top floor.

They stepped out into a narrow hallway that led to a door at the end.

The man opened the door.

A cool wind rushed inside.

They stepped onto the roof.

The city stretched out below them, filled with lights and distant sounds.

Flambeau walked toward the edge of the roof.

“This is where she fell?”

The man nodded.

“Yes.”

Father Brown approached the edge slowly.

He looked down at the street far below.

“A fall from here would certainly be fatal,” he said quietly.

Flambeau examined the surface of the roof.

“No signs of a struggle,” he said.

Father Brown looked toward a small stairway that led back down into the building.

“Who was with her before she fell?”

The man answered.

“Kalón.”

Flambeau turned quickly.

“The leader of the religion?”

“Yes.”

Father Brown looked thoughtful.

“And what did he say happened?”

The man spoke quietly.

“He said she suddenly ran toward the edge and jumped.”

Flambeau frowned.

“That is a convenient explanation.”

Father Brown nodded slowly.

“Yes.”

He walked to the edge again and looked down.

The wind moved strongly across the roof.

“People who worship the sun often speak about rising above the world,” he said quietly.

Flambeau glanced at him.

“You do not believe she jumped willingly.”

Father Brown shook his head gently.

“No.”

He turned toward the stairway.

“I believe someone pushed her.”

The wind grew stronger across the roof.

And somewhere below them, in the quiet building, the mysterious Kalón was waiting.

### Part 3

Father Brown, Flambeau, and the tall man returned from the roof and walked down the narrow stairs into the building again.

The hallway was quiet, and the electric lights shone brightly along the walls.

“Where is this Kalón now?” Flambeau asked.

The man pointed toward a door at the end of the corridor.

“He lives there.”

They walked slowly toward the door.

When they knocked, the door opened almost immediately.

A tall man stood before them.

He had bright eyes, dark hair, and a confident smile.

“Good evening,” he said calmly.

Father Brown bowed slightly.

“You are Mr. Kalón?”

The man nodded.

“Yes.”

Flambeau looked at him carefully.

“We would like to speak with you about Pauline Stacey.”

Kalón’s expression did not change.

“Of course,” he said.

He stepped aside and allowed them to enter his apartment.

The room was bright and modern. Large windows allowed the evening light to enter, and the walls were decorated with symbols of the sun.

Golden circles and rays appeared in many places around the room.

Flambeau looked around with interest.

“You truly admire the sun,” he said.

Kalón smiled.

“The sun is the source of all life,” he said. “It represents truth, light, and purity.”

Father Brown nodded politely.

“And Pauline Stacey believed this?”

Kalón sat calmly in a chair.

“Yes. She became very devoted to our philosophy.”

Flambeau spoke directly.

“You were with her on the roof yesterday.”

Kalón nodded.

“Yes.”

Father Brown looked at him quietly.

“And she suddenly jumped?”

Kalón spread his hands.

“She became overwhelmed by spiritual emotion.”

Flambeau frowned.

“That seems unlikely.”

Kalón’s smile remained calm.

“You may believe what you wish.”

Father Brown looked slowly around the room.

His eyes stopped for a moment on a large window that looked out over the city.

Then he spoke quietly.

“You admire the sun very much.”

Kalón nodded proudly.

“Yes.”

Father Brown continued.

“But I notice that you also admire money.”

Flambeau turned toward him with interest.

Kalón’s smile faded slightly.

“What do you mean?”

Father Brown spoke gently.

“Pauline Stacey was investigating financial fraud in this building.”

The room became silent.

Flambeau’s eyes widened.

“Fraud?”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes. And she discovered that the leader of a strange religion was secretly stealing money from his followers.”

Kalón’s face grew pale.

Father Brown looked at him quietly.

“So you pushed her from the roof.”

The room was completely silent.

Flambeau spoke softly.

“The eye of Apollo sees everything.”

Father Brown shook his head gently.

“No,” he said.

“But sometimes a very ordinary eye can see enough.”

And the false prophet of the sun had finally been revealed.

## The Sign of the Broken Sword

### Part 1

In a quiet countryside far from the city stood a small stone monument.

The monument had been built many years earlier to honor a famous soldier named General Sir Arthur St. Clare.

According to the story told in the nearby village, the general had died bravely during a battle long ago. His soldiers believed he had sacrificed his life to protect them.

The monument stood beside an old road that passed through green fields and small woods.

One afternoon Father Brown and Flambeau walked along that road.

They had come to visit the monument because of a strange request from a historian who lived in the village.

The historian believed the story of the general's death might not be true.

When Father Brown and Flambeau reached the monument, they saw the historian waiting for them.

He was a thin man with grey hair and bright, curious eyes.

"Father Brown," he said excitedly, "I am very glad you came."

Father Brown greeted him politely.

"You wished to speak about General St. Clare."

The historian nodded.

"Yes. The story of his death is celebrated as a great act of courage."

Flambeau looked at the monument.

A carved sword appeared on the stone, but the blade was broken in the middle.

"The sign of the broken sword," Flambeau said.

The historian nodded.

"It represents sacrifice."

Father Brown looked thoughtfully at the monument.

"And you believe the story is wrong?"

The historian spoke quietly.

“I believe the truth may be very different.”

Flambeau looked interested.

“Tell us the story first.”

The historian pointed toward the fields beyond the monument.

“Many years ago, General St. Clare led a small group of soldiers through those hills.”

“They were surprised by a large enemy force.”

Father Brown listened quietly.

The historian continued.

“According to the legend, the general fought bravely to protect his men.”

“He died while holding off the enemy so his soldiers could escape.”

Flambeau nodded.

“That sounds like a heroic death.”

The historian lowered his voice.

“But some details do not make sense.”

Father Brown looked at him calmly.

“Which details?”

The historian pointed to the monument again.

“The general’s body was found here beside the road.”

Flambeau looked around.

“And?”

The historian spoke quietly.

“The direction of the wounds suggests something very strange.”

Father Brown’s eyes grew thoughtful.

“Strange in what way?”

The historian answered slowly.

“It appears the general may have been killed by his own men.”

Flambeau stared at him.

“That would change the entire story.”

Father Brown looked once more at the carved image of the broken sword.

“Yes,” he said quietly.

“Sometimes monuments hide truths rather than reveal them.”

And the mystery of the broken sword had begun.

## Part 2

The wind moved softly across the fields around the monument.

Father Brown, Flambeau, and the historian stood quietly beside the stone.

Flambeau looked again at the carved sword on the monument.

“You believe the general was killed by his own soldiers,” he said.

The historian nodded slowly.

“Yes.”

Father Brown looked thoughtful.

“Tell us about the battle,” he said.

The historian began walking slowly along the road.

“The general and his men were traveling through these hills,” he explained.

“They believed the area was safe.”

Flambeau followed beside him.

“But the enemy appeared suddenly.”

The historian nodded.

“Yes. A much larger force.”

Father Brown asked quietly,

“And what happened then?”

The historian pointed toward a distant hill.

“According to the official story, the general ordered his men to retreat while he fought alone.”

Flambeau shrugged.

“A noble sacrifice.”

The historian shook his head.

“But the evidence does not support that.”

Father Brown looked at him carefully.

“What evidence?”

The historian answered.

“The wounds on the general’s body were made by weapons used by his own army.”

Flambeau frowned.

“That is very serious.”

The historian continued.

“Also, the enemy soldiers who were later captured gave a different story.”

Father Brown asked gently,

“What story?”

The historian spoke slowly.

“They said the general was not fighting bravely.”

Flambeau looked surprised.

“What was he doing?”

The historian lowered his voice.

“He was trying to escape.”

The fields around them remained silent.

Father Brown looked down at the ground.

“Then his soldiers discovered this,” he said quietly.

The historian nodded.

“Yes.”

Flambeau crossed his arms.

“So the soldiers killed their own general.”

The historian shook his head.

“I believe they stopped him.”

Father Brown looked up at the monument again.

“And afterward,” he said softly, “they told a different story.”

The historian nodded.

“Yes. They created a legend of heroic sacrifice.”

Flambeau sighed.

“History often prefers beautiful stories.”

Father Brown looked calmly at the broken sword carved into the stone.

“Yes,” he said.

“But sometimes a broken sword tells the truth more clearly than a shining one.”

### Part 3

Father Brown stood quietly beside the monument and looked at the carved image of the broken sword.

The afternoon light had grown softer, and long shadows stretched across the road and fields.

Flambeau spoke slowly.

“If the story is false, why did the soldiers create such a legend?”

The historian answered.

“Perhaps they wished to protect the reputation of their army.”

Father Brown shook his head gently.

“No.”

Both men looked at him.

Flambeau asked,

“Then why?”

Father Brown spoke quietly.

“Because they were good men.”

The historian looked surprised.

“Good men?”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

He looked out across the fields where the battle had once taken place.

“Imagine the situation,” he said.

“The soldiers suddenly discover that their general is trying to abandon them.”

Flambeau nodded slowly.

“That would destroy their courage.”

Father Brown continued.

“If the army believed their leader was a coward, the entire force might collapse.”

The historian’s eyes widened.

“So the soldiers stopped him.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

Flambeau looked thoughtful.

“But afterward they could not tell the truth.”

Father Brown spoke gently.

“Because the truth would shame both the general and the army.”

The historian slowly looked back at the monument.

“So they created a story of sacrifice.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

He paused.

“In a strange way, they were protecting the honor of everyone involved.”

Flambeau sighed.

“History often hides uncomfortable truths.”

Father Brown looked at the broken sword once more.

“Yes.”

The wind moved softly through the grass around the monument.

“But sometimes,” Father Brown said quietly, “the truth survives in small details.”

The historian looked at the carving again.

“The broken sword.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

He smiled gently.

“Even when people try to hide the truth, it often leaves a small sign behind.”

The three men stood quietly beside the monument for a moment longer.

And the old mystery of the broken sword had finally been understood.

## The Three Tools of Death

### Part 1

In a quiet part of the English countryside stood a large and comfortable house surrounded by gardens and trees.

The house belonged to a wealthy man named Sir Aaron Armstrong.

Sir Aaron was known as a strong and energetic man. He enjoyed sports, hunting, and outdoor activities.

But one morning the peaceful countryside was disturbed by shocking news.

Sir Aaron Armstrong had been found dead.

Father Brown and Flambeau arrived at the house that afternoon.

The sky was grey, and a cold wind moved through the garden trees.

A police officer met them near the front door.

“Thank you for coming,” the officer said.

Father Brown nodded politely.

“Tell us what happened.”

The officer spoke slowly.

“Sir Aaron was found hanging from a tree in the garden.”

Flambeau raised his eyebrows.

“Suicide?”

The officer hesitated.

“Perhaps.”

Father Brown asked quietly,

“But something is strange?”

The officer nodded.

“Yes.”

He led them into the garden.

The large tree stood near the edge of the lawn.

A rope still hung from one of its branches.

Flambeau looked up at it.

“That seems clear enough.”

The officer shook his head.

“Look at the ground.”

They looked down.

Beside the tree lay a heavy hammer.

A few steps away lay a sharp knife.

And near the garden wall rested a large spade.

Flambeau frowned.

“Three tools.”

The officer nodded.

“Exactly.”

Father Brown looked thoughtfully at the objects.

“And none of them were used?”

“No,” the officer said.

Flambeau crossed his arms.

“Then why are they here?”

The officer answered.

“That is the mystery.”

Father Brown walked slowly around the tree.

“Who discovered the body?” he asked.

The officer replied.

“Sir Aaron’s secretary.”

Flambeau looked interested.

“Where is this secretary?”

The officer pointed toward the house.

“Inside.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Then we should speak with him.”

As they walked back toward the house, Flambeau looked again at the three tools lying on the grass.

“Hammer, knife, and spade,” he said.

Father Brown spoke quietly.

“Three tools that could each cause death.”

Flambeau nodded.

“Yet none of them were used.”

Father Brown smiled slightly.

“That is why they are important.”

And the strange mystery of the three tools of death had begun.

## Part 2

Father Brown, Flambeau, and the police officer entered the large house and walked into a quiet study.

A thin man stood beside the desk.

He wore dark clothes and glasses, and his face looked pale and tired.

The officer introduced him.

“This is Mr. Merton, Sir Aaron Armstrong’s secretary.”

Father Brown nodded politely.

“Good afternoon.”

Mr. Merton spoke quietly.

“Good afternoon.”

Flambeau looked at him carefully.

“You discovered Sir Aaron’s body?”

Merton nodded.

“Yes. I went into the garden this morning and saw him hanging from the tree.”

Father Brown asked gently,

“Did he seem unhappy recently?”

Merton hesitated.

“Sir Aaron was a very strong man,” he said.

Flambeau smiled faintly.

“Strong men sometimes have strong enemies.”

The secretary looked uncomfortable.

Father Brown spoke again.

“Tell me about the tools in the garden.”

Merton blinked.

“Tools?”

“Yes,” Father Brown said. “A hammer, a knife, and a spade.”

The secretary looked confused.

“I did not notice them.”

Flambeau raised an eyebrow.

“They are difficult to miss.”

The secretary swallowed nervously.

“Perhaps I was too shocked.”

Father Brown nodded slowly.

“Yes. That is possible.”

The room fell silent.

Father Brown walked slowly around the study.

He looked at the books, the desk, and the window that faced the garden.

Finally he spoke.

“Sir Aaron Armstrong was not the kind of man who would easily kill himself.”

The secretary said nothing.

Flambeau crossed his arms.

“Then perhaps he was murdered.”

The secretary’s face grew pale again.

Father Brown continued quietly.

“The tools in the garden suggest something strange.”

Flambeau nodded.

“Three tools that could each be used for killing.”

Father Brown smiled faintly.

“Yes.”

He turned toward the secretary.

“But they were not placed there for killing.”

The secretary looked confused.

“Then why are they there?”

Father Brown answered softly.

“Because someone wanted us to think about death in three different ways.”

Flambeau looked interested.

“A hammer for violence, a knife for murder, and a spade for burial.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

The secretary’s hands began to tremble slightly.

Father Brown looked at him gently.

“But the real death happened in a much simpler way.”

Flambeau leaned forward.

“How?”

Father Brown spoke quietly.

“With a rope.”

And the strange meaning of the three tools was slowly becoming clear.

### Part 3

The quiet study seemed colder after Father Brown spoke.

Mr. Merton stood beside the desk, his hands trembling slightly.

Flambeau watched him closely.

“A rope,” Flambeau repeated. “Sir Aaron died by hanging.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

The police officer spoke slowly.

“But that would suggest suicide.”

Father Brown looked thoughtful.

“Only if he tied the rope himself.”

Flambeau looked toward the secretary again.

“And perhaps he did not.”

Mr. Merton spoke quickly.

“Sir Aaron had many troubles. It is possible he lost hope.”

Father Brown shook his head gently.

“No.”

The secretary looked frightened.

“Why not?”

Father Brown answered calmly.

“Because the three tools were placed there afterward.”

Flambeau nodded slowly.

“They were meant to confuse us.”

Father Brown continued.

“Someone wanted the police to imagine many different possibilities.”

The officer looked thoughtful.

“Violence with a hammer.”

Flambeau added,

“A stabbing with a knife.”

Father Brown finished quietly,

“And a burial with a spade.”

The secretary lowered his eyes.

Father Brown looked at him kindly.

“But the truth was simpler.”

The room was silent.

“Sir Aaron was attacked suddenly,” Father Brown said.

“The killer used the rope to strangle him and then hung the body to make it appear like suicide.”

Flambeau nodded.

“And afterward the tools were placed in the garden.”

The secretary whispered,

“Why would anyone do that?”

Father Brown answered gently.

“Because the killer was clever but nervous.”

Flambeau looked at the pale man.

“Nervous men often make mistakes.”

Father Brown nodded.

“Yes.”

He spoke quietly.

“For example, they sometimes place too many clues.”

The secretary’s voice trembled.

“You believe I did this?”

Father Brown looked at him with quiet sadness.

“Yes.”

Mr. Merton collapsed into a chair.

“Sir Aaron discovered that I had been stealing money from his business,” he whispered.

Flambeau sighed.

“So you killed him before he could expose you.”

The secretary nodded weakly.

Father Brown spoke softly.

“And then you tried to hide the truth with three tools of death.”

The room remained silent.

Outside, the cold wind moved through the garden trees.

And the final mystery of the strange house had been solved.