

"I felt very sorry for Franklin when he was so misunderstood by Rachel. Thank goodness Sergeant Cuff could work out what had happened." Ian, 12



THE MOONSTONE

WILKIE COLLINS

Rachel opened the box and lifted out the diamond. She held it up in a ray of sunlight that poured through the window, and cried out in amazement.

When Rachel Verinder inherits the Moonstone from her uncle on her eighteenth birthday, the wonderful jewel is intended to make her rich and happy. So why is her mother so worried about this valuable gift?

Rachel seems very fond of her cousin, Franklin Blake. When trouble strikes, why does she refuse his help? What has he done to offend her?

Can Sergeant Cuff, the famous detective, solve the dangerous mystery of the Moonstone before it is too late?



ISBN 978-1-906230-51-7



9 781906 230517

www.realreads.co.uk



THE MOONSTONE Wilkie Collins



Retold by Tony Evans
Illustrated by Felix Bennett



THE MOONSTONE

WILKIE COLLINS



www.realreads.co.uk

Retold by Tony Evans
Illustrated by Felix Bennett

CONTENTS

The Characters	4
The Moonstone	7
Taking things further	55

Published by Real Reads Ltd
Newbury, Berkshire, UK
www.realreads.co.uk

Text copyright © Tony Evans 2011

Illustrations copyright © Felix Bennett 2011

The right of Tony Evans to be identified as author of
this book has been asserted by him in accordance with the
Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988

First published in 2011

All rights reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any
form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including
photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval
system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

ISBN 978-1-906230-51-7

Printed in Singapore by Imago Ltd
Designed by Lucy Guenot
Typeset by Bookcraft Ltd, Stroud, Gloucestershire



THE CHARACTERS

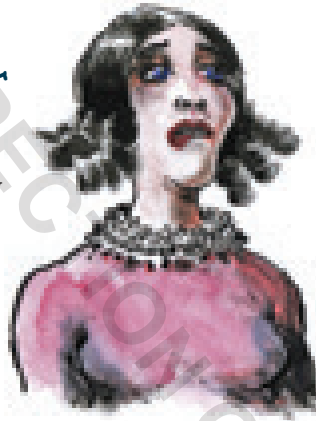


Franklin Blake

Franklin Blake is a handsome, lively young man. When he visits his cousin Rachel, will he bring her happiness, or trouble?

Rachel Verinder

Rachel is beautiful and high-spirited. What does she really know about the mystery of the Moonstone? What secret is she hiding?



Lady Verinder

Rachel's pleasant, kind mother. Why is she so anxious when she finds out about her daughter's birthday gift?

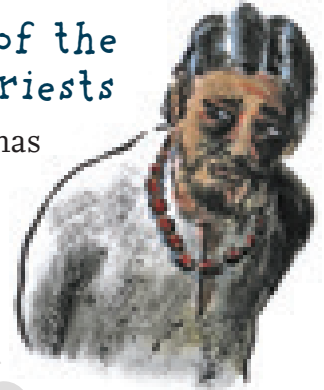


Godfrey Ablewhite

Godfrey is tall, good-looking, and does charity work and other fine deeds. But is some trouble threatening him?

The leader of the three Indian priests

Determined and clever, he has followed Franklin Blake all the way from London. What are the three priests doing in England? Are they involved in a sinister plot?



Sergeant Cuff

One of the most famous detectives in England. When Lady Verinder asks him for help, will he be able to solve the mystery?

Mr Bruff

A kind-hearted lawyer and Lady Verinder's family solicitor, can Bruff help Franklin and Rachel discover the truth about the Moonstone?





THE MOONSTONE

The last thing that I wanted to do was to worry my aunt, but I was sure that my news would upset her. As I waited in the sitting room of her large country house, I could hardly believe that twelve years had gone by since my last visit. My father had sent me abroad to study when I was thirteen years old, and I had only returned to England last month. My aunt, Lady Julia Verinder, had invited me to her daughter's eighteenth birthday party. Rachel had been very young when I last saw her – would we still recognise each other?

Lady Verinder entered the room. She was still the pleasant, kind lady I remembered from my boyhood. After we had exchanged greetings, my aunt sent for tea. I noticed that the maid who brought it to us blushed bright red, and her hand shook as she poured out the milk.

When the maid left the room, my aunt said with a smile, 'You have made a great impression on Rosanna. She is the servant who will be keeping your room tidy while you are staying with us. As you can see, she is not used to a handsome young man in the house! Now, I believe you have something important to say to me.'

I nodded. 'It concerns the recent death of your brother, John Hearncastle.'

My aunt's face looked troubled. Her brother had led a very wicked life. My aunt had refused to have anything to do with him, and he in turn had hated her.

'When I returned to England, my father told me that he had agreed to carry out the instructions in John Hearncastle's will,' I continued. 'It seems that when your brother knew he was dying, he sent for a clergyman and asked to be forgiven for all his bad deeds.'



Lady Verinder raised her eyebrows. 'So I heard. It is hard to believe.'

'He also asked my father to look after a very valuable gift, which he said should be given to your daughter on her eighteenth birthday, as a sign of friendship and forgiveness to you both. It is now in the strong room in Frizinghall Bank. On Rachel's birthday, in four weeks time, I will ride to Frizinghall and collect it.'

- We are given more information about how the Indian priests track down Godfrey Ablewhite, and get into his room at the public house. After they reclaim the Moonstone, they make an exciting escape to India.

Back in time

When Queen Victoria came to the throne in 1837, the Metropolitan (or London) Police Force had been established only eight years earlier, in 1829. It was not until 1856 that all English counties had a proper police service. Along with the new police force came a new kind of popular story – the detective mystery. *The Moonstone*, set in 1848 and written in 1868, is one of the very first detective stories. It was a best seller when it first appeared. Wilkie Collins' detective, Sergeant Cuff, was based on a real life policeman who worked at Scotland Yard – Jonathan Whicher. Inspector Whicher became famous when he was asked to investigate a horrible crime, the Constant Kent murder, in 1860. The Inspector discovered

the truth, but could not prove anything. His suspect confessed five years later.

The mid-Victorian public shared an interest in sensational crime and detection with modern readers, but another of the themes of *The Moonstone* is now harder for us to understand – the Victorian fascination with India. Like many other European countries, Victorian Britain ruled over a large overseas empire, and most people did not question the right of one nation to colonise and exploit another. India, the most important part of the British Empire, was seen as thrilling and mysterious. Collins' descriptions of Indian priests, Hindu temples and exotic diamonds would have let his readers experience some of the strangeness of a country that most would never visit.

The Empire was a source of great wealth to the Victorians. As well as making money through trade with the Empire, colonial rulers brought many rare and precious objects back to Britain. Although this practice was seldom