



# The Murders in the Rue Morgue

## Part Six

MY FRIEND DUPIN was now certain that the murders in the Rue Morgue had been done by a wild animal of the jungle\*, the manlike animal known as an orangoutang. The animal had escaped from its owner, he thought; and the owner was probably a sailor. He had put a notice in the newspaper that the man who owned the orangoutang could have it again if he came to our house to get it. Now, as the owner came to our door, we were both wondering if that man would, as Dupin guessed, be a sailor.

Yes. The man who entered was indeed a sailor. He was a large man, and strong. He carried a big, heavy piece of wood, but no gun. He said to us, in French: "Good evening."

"Sit down, my friend. I suppose you have come to ask about the orangoutang. A very fine animal. I have no doubt that it is a very valuable\* animal. How old do you think it may be?"

"I have no way of guessing how old it is, but it can't be more than four or five years old. Have you got it<sup>1</sup> here?"

"No, no. We have no place for it here. You can get it<sup>1</sup> in the morning. Of course you can prove it is yours?"

"Yes. Yes, I can."

"I wish I could keep it."

"I would like to have it. I...of course I will pay you for finding and keeping the animal. Anything...anything within reason."

"Well...That is very fair, indeed. Let me think. What shall I ask for? I know! Let this be my pay. Tell me everything you know about the murders in the Rue Morgue."

As quietly as he had spoken Dupin walked to the door, locked\* it, and put the key\* in his coat. At the same time he took a gun out of his coat and placed it on the table.

The sailor's face had become red. He jumped to his feet and reached for his stick of wood, but in the next moment he fell back into his chair, trembling\*. His face became quite white, bloodless. He spoke not a word. His eyes were closed.

"My friend, you must not be afraid. We are not going to hurt you. I know very well that you yourself are not the killer. But it is true that you know something about him — or about it. From what I have already said, you must know that I have ways of learning about the matter — ways you could never have dreamed of.

"Now, I know that you yourself have done nothing wrong. You didn't even take any of the money. You have no reason to be afraid to talk and to tell the truth. It is a matter of honor for you to tell all you know. And you know who the killer is."

"So help me God!<sup>2</sup> I...I'll tell you all I know about this, all I know — but I don't expect you to believe one half of what I say — not one half. Still, I didn't kill anyone, and I'll tell the whole story if I die for it;<sup>3</sup> It was that animal! The orangoutang!...

"About a year ago our ship sailed to the Far East<sup>4</sup>, to the island of Borneo\*. I had never before seen Borneo. The forest\*, the jungle, was thick with trees and other plants, and hot and wet and dark. But we went — a friend and I — we went into that forest — for pleasure. There we saw this orang-

outang, a big animal. But we were two, and we caught it. We took it with us on the ship. Soon, however, my friend died, and the animal was mine. But it was very strong and caused a lot of trouble.

“In the end I brought it back to Paris with me. I kept it in my house, in my own house, carefully locked up, so the neighbors could not know about it. The animal had cut one foot badly while on the ship. I thought...I thought that as soon as it got<sup>5</sup> well I would sell it. I was certain it was of great value. And it was so much trouble to keep<sup>6</sup>! I wanted to sell it, soon.

“The night of the murders, very late, I came home and found the animal in my bedroom. It had got<sup>5</sup> free, I don’t know how. It held a knife\* in its hands, and was playing with it. I was afraid. I didn’t know what to do. When it saw me it jumped up, ran out of the room and down the stairs\*. There it found an open window and jumped into the street. I followed, never far behind, although I had no hope of catching it again. The animal, with the knife still in its hand, stopped often to look back at me. But before I could come near enough to even try to catch it, the animal always started to run again. It seemed to be playing with me.

“It was nearly morning, but the streets were still dark, and quiet. We passed the back of a house in the Rue Morgue. The animal looked up and saw a light in the open window of a room high above. It was the only lighted window in sight. The animal saw the metal pole, went up it easily and quickly, and jumped into the room. All this didn’t take a minute.

“I didn’t know what to do. I didn’t know what I could do. I followed the animal. I too went up the pole. As I am a sailor it was easy for me. But the open window was far from the pole and I was afraid to try to jump. I could see into the room, however, through the other window, which was closed.

“The two women were sitting there, with their backs to the windows. Who can guess why they were not sleeping at that hour of the night? A box was in the middle of the floor. The papers which had been in the box were lying around on the floor. The women seemed to be studying some of these. They did not see the animal, which was just standing there, watching, the knife still in one hand. But the old woman heard

it and turned her head and saw the animal there, knife in hand<sup>7</sup>, and then...then I heard the first of those terrible cries.

“When the animal heard the old woman’s cry it caught her by the hair and slowly moved the knife before her face. The daughter, filled with terror\*, fell to the floor and remained there without moving, her eyes closed. The old woman continued to cry for help, screaming with fear. I think the animal now was as afraid as the old woman was. With terrible force it pulled out a handful of hair. And when the woman, covered with blood, tried to run from it, the animal caught her again by the hair and with one move of its arm it nearly cut her head from her body. Throwing down the body, the animal turned and saw that the daughter was moving, watching it with horror\*. With fire in its eyes it rushed to the girl, put its powerful fingers around her neck, and pressed them firmly there until she died.

“When the girl stopped moving, the animal dropped her body to the floor and looked up. It saw my face in the window. It began to run around the room, quickly, without purpose. It jumped up and down, breaking the chairs, pulling the bed to pieces. Suddenly it stopped and took the body of the daughter and, as if to hide it, with terrible strength it put the body up above the fireplace\*, where it was found. It threw the old woman out the window.

“All this time I was hanging from the pole, filled with horror. It seemed I had lost the power to move. But when I saw the animal coming toward the window with the old woman’s body, my horror became fear. I went quickly down — I almost fell down the pole, and I ran. I didn’t look back. I ran! Oh, my God! My God!”

The Chief of the police was not happy that the answer to the mystery\* of the killings had been found by someone who was not a policeman. He said that people should keep to their own business<sup>8</sup>. “Let him talk,” said Dupin.

“Let him talk. He’ll feel better for it<sup>3</sup>. And he’s a good fellow. But he makes things less simple than they really are. Still, people call him skillful\*, and even wise\*. I think they say this because of the way he explains, carefully, fully, something which is not here, or there, or anywhere\*; and says, “Not possible!” about something which is there before his eyes.”