



One of our young writers, Advay (age 10), is in the process of writing a novel! His story takes readers on an adventurous journey through mid-20th century England. It revolves around Detective Earl Rubber Kettleton Stroganoff II, who lives in the grand Kettleton Manor and works for the Ministry of Detectives. The plot is rich with intricate details, from the detective's lifestyle to the mysteries he solves.

While we eagerly await the completed work, which promises a captivating blend of detective work, historical settings, and unique characters, Advay has shared an excerpt for us to read.



It was a fine morning in London, 1954. October was already here, and snowstorms hadn't yet started, though it was already cold enough to snow a bit at night sometimes. On the southern outskirts of Northamptonshire, just north of London, one would note an impressive manor called Kettleton Manor, which had been home to over 27 Earls of Northamptonshire. The building was a grand one, with ivory white walls, and was over 600 years old with around 320 rooms. The property was 36 acres big and included fencing arenas, a golf course, a polo ground, and a stable full of 40 horses. The current occupier was Earl Rubber Kettleton Stroganoff II, better known as Detective Stroganoff. He worked as a top detective for the 'Ministry of Detectives,' the best detective agency in the country. It was founded some 50 years ago by the famous detective Ronald Munster Wilson. Stroganoff was a smart young man, rather short, with blue eyes, broad shoulders, and a small nose. The earl was getting up a bit late that day, so he hurriedly dressed to go to work. He descended the stairs in a Davies and Son suit along with a gold pocket watch, all bought with his vast inheritance (working at the ministry provided more fame than money). He went to one of the dining halls, which had a long dinner table set with silverware, an ivory table with a gold 15th-century lamp, a big chandelier, and a fireplace along with a wolfskin rug. He sat at one end of the table and called out for his butler named Jones, who was dressed in a white shirt, black pants, a tall black hat, a dark green cloak, a pair of Wellington boots, and a monocle. He was currently lighting the fireplace when the detective called him.

"Jones! What's for breakfast?"

"There are sausages, eggs, buttered toast, Costa Rican coffee, tomatoes, haddock, and a salad, my lord," replied Jones, handing Stroganoff a freshly ironed newspaper, as it was customary in those days.

"Hey, did you know they are opening a new branch of Teller's bank?" asked Stroganoff, looking at an article in the paper.

"No, my lord."

"Oh, well. Serve breakfast in a minute, please."

"Excellent, my lord," replied the butler and went into the kitchen to tell the cooks to serve breakfast.

After breakfast, the detective got in a carriage and sped off to Central London, where the Ministry of Detectives was located. It was a pencil-shaped skyscraper, and with eighty-two floors, was one of the tallest buildings in that part of the city. A footman held the carriage door open as Stroganoff got off the vehicle. He entered the lobby of the building and went up to the reception, which, frankly speaking, was the only thing in the hall except the stairs, doors to the library and record room, some desks, couches, and the lifts.

"Detective Stroganoff reporting," he said. The receptionist scribbled his name in a register as the detective went towards the lifts. He went up to the 59th floor, where his office was. When he reached, his secretary Bob Smith was already there. He was tall, with a pointy nose and ears, a freckled face, dressed in a blue coat and black pants.

"Mornin', Smith," greeted Stroganoff.

"Good morning," said Smith. "You know, Elsie was calling you." Elsie was the French deputy director of the Ministry.

"Whatever for?" questioned the detective.

"Not sure, but I think she said something about a case." Stroganoff's eyes twinkled because he loved solving cases, and it had been almost 4 months since his last one. He went to her office, which was plain and only had a cabinet, a shelf full of books, a table on which a lantern was kept and served the purpose of light, and a stove to keep warm, some chairs, a desk on which her secretary was typing away on a typewriter, and her maple wood desk on which she sat, every last inch of it covered in files and notes. He came in and took a seat.

"Bonjour, monsieur Stroganoff," said Elsie, her eyes not wavering from a file she was examining.

"Bonjour," replied Stroganoff.

"So you know, the work you did on the last case was absolutely tres bien!"

"Oui, oui," agreed the detective.

"So I am giving you another one. La case is regarding some ancient treasure which was unearthed in a forest on the southeastern cliffs on the seashore near Southampton. It was stored in Punting's circus-"

"The one which has the biggest circus tent in the world?"

"Oui." Punting's circus had, in fact, a circus tent as big as 47 football pitches and was 50 meters tall, the largest in the world. Their performances were famous, and sometimes there were 7-8 different programs going on at once! In short, it was the best circus.

"Well," carried on Elsie, "it has been stolen!"

"And you need me to find it."

"Exactly. And you will also find that we have sent a pilot there who will transport you inside the tent. You shall leave in 3 days."

"Excellent!" exclaimed Stroganoff and left to tell the news to Smith.



Three days later, the earl, dressed in a Gieves and Hawks suit, a top hat, a pure gold pocket watch, and his favorite detective coat, which on the inside was covered with sedatives, lockpicking tools, matches, a dagger, a revolver, disguises, and the sort, sat down on a chair in the porch. He would set out at exactly 8:30 am, which was 20 minutes from now, in his new Bentley Mark VI. He didn't like going out in the Bentley because people would 'ooh' and 'aah' at it since it wasn't exactly the most affordable car, but his Porsche would get the same reaction and none of the other cars were fit enough for the long journey. At that moment, a messenger came up and said:

"Sir, Mr. Smith and Ms. Elsie wish to accompany you on the journey. Please arrange for one more car."

'Great,' thought Stroganoff. 'Now I'll have to take the Porsche too.' He sent off the messenger, and in 10 minutes, got the Bentley and the Porsche and headed to the Ministry. He instructed the chauffeurs to park the cars and then fetched Smith and Elsie.

"Not bad cars you got there," commented Smith.

"Impressive," added Elsie.

"Whatever. Get in," said the earl, scowling. After a long drive and a stop at a gas station, they reached Southampton. They got off at a hotel called 'The Grandeur,'

the finest one in Southampton. After a fine dinner of meat pie and pudding, they got back in the cars, and since it was only a half-hour drive to the cliffs, they decided to explore Southampton a bit. After visiting a monument, a library, a park, and a football stadium, Smith and Elsie got in the Bentley and went back to Northamptonshire, while Stroganoff headed to the cliffs in the Porsche. It was windy on the cliffs. The tent was humongous; you couldn't even see a quarter of it at one time. It was situated on the edge of the cliffs, but you couldn't tell that it was. In fact, it took up almost the entire cliff. It was also on the edge of the forest where the treasure was unearthed. There was a small hut in the forest where the forest keeper lived. It was dark now, so you could barely see the hut. Stroganoff stepped inside the massive tent after sending the car back to Northamptonshire when a figure popped up in front of him.

"Hello! I am Charlotte Flite. You are probably Detective Stroganoff. I am your pilot."

"Oh. Pleased to meet you," replied the detective wearily. "Where are the sleeping quarters?"

"Come on. I'll show you." They went towards a small Cessna airplane.

"I hope I'm not sleeping in that thing," joked the detective.

"No, no. We'll use it to go to the bedrooms." The plane took off and, to Stroganoff's annoyance, was too loud for comfort. They flew over the audience seats and landed in the ring. Stroganoff found that there was a large circle of rooms between the audience and the performing ring. The rooms included bedrooms, backstage, storerooms, vaults, offices, drawing rooms, etc. The rooms didn't have a roof, so when they were flying, they could see what was inside the rooms. The seats for the audience were raised so they could see over the rooms.

The front ones were raised less, but you had to use ladders for the last rows. The detective went to a room and immediately fell asleep. The next day, he dressed in a Henry Poole suit, Wellington boots, a walking stick, his detective coat, a pocket watch, and a hat and went for breakfast outside, where the circus folk were cooking ham on a fire.

"Mornin', detective!" said Charlotte. "Let me introduce you to everyone. This is James, the manager, and Larry, Ted, and Spud here are the strongmen. John, Clint, Jessica, Pond, Arnold, and Patrick are the acrobats. The clowns Mark, Aston, Ford, and Jude are great company. Here come Pods and Dreg, the lion and bear tamers. Joe, the ringleader, and Christine, the magician, are over there, and this is Tix, the chimney sweep. The cooks Brenda and Cindy are inside, and the puppet show people Grandma Right and Bob are next to you. And on your other side are the prop master and his assistant, George and Beth, and the three guards Edward, Herbert, and Cling."

"Hi everyone," said Stroganoff briefly and proceeded to take his breakfast from Aston. After breakfast, Stroganoff went and surveyed the scene of the crime.

The treasure was kept in a vault, which was the only room with a roof. You could see the trunk in which the treasure was stored. It was empty except for one chest that the intruder had left.

"Why was this one not stolen?" questioned the detective.

"We're not really sure, but this particular chest is the only one with just gold, silver, and copper. The others were full of stones such as amethysts, turquoises, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, moonstones, diamonds, onyxes, ambers, jets, pearls, etcetera along with gold."

"I see." Then, Stroganoff turned to the guards. "Did you notice any strange activity during the heist?"

"No," they said in unison. The detective turned to the vault and noted these clues:

1. A hole in the roof from which the thief/thieves had probably come in.
2. The chest which had not been stolen.
3. A rope.