

I. IN WHICH PHILEAS FOGG AND PASSEPARTOUT MUTUALLY ACCEPT EACH OTHER AS MASTER AND MANSERVANT



In the year 1872 the house at 7 Savile Row in Burlington Gardens—the house where Sheridan died in 1816—was the residence of Phileas Fogg, Esq., one of the most distinctive and noteworthy members of the Reform Club in London, though he seemed to shrink from doing anything that might attract attention.

One of England's greatest orators had been replaced, then, by this Phileas Fogg, a mystifying individual nobody knew anything about, except that he was quite well bred and one of the finest gentlemen in English high society.

He was said to resemble Byron—though he didn't have a clubfoot, at least his profile was Byronic—but a Byron with mustache and side-whiskers, an unemotional Byron who could have lived to a thousand without showing his age.

Though definitely English, Phileas Fogg may not have been a Londoner. You never saw him at the stock exchange, the Bank of England, or any of the financial establishments in the business district. London's docks and shipyards had never berthed a vessel owned by Phileas Fogg. The gentleman wasn't listed on any board of directors. His name never rang out in any college of lawyers, not the Temple, Lincoln's Inn, or Gray's Inn. He'd never pleaded a case in the Courts of Chancery, Queen's Bench, or Exchequer, nor in the Ecclesiastical Court. He wasn't a manufacturer, wholesaler, shopkeeper, or farmer. He didn't belong to the Royal Institution of Great Britain, the London Institution, the Artisan Society, the Russell Institution, the Western Literary Institution, the Law Society, or the Combined Society for the Arts and Sciences, which is under the direct patronage of Her Gracious Majesty. In short, he hadn't joined any of the many societies that teem in England's capital, from the Harmonic Union to the Entomological Society, which had been formed chiefly for the purpose of exterminating pesky insects.

Phileas Fogg was a member of the Reform Club and nothing more.

To anybody who might be amazed that such a secretive gentleman could be a member of this respectable association, we'll reply that he got in on the recommendation of Baring



Phileas Fogg.

Brothers & Co., the famous bank where he had an unlimited line of credit. Ergo he enjoyed a definite “status,” since his checking account always showed a positive balance and drafts ordinarily went through on sight.

Was this Phileas Fogg a wealthy man? Indisputably. But even the best informed couldn’t say how he’d made his fortune, and Mr. Fogg was the last person they were inclined to approach for enlightenment. In any case he neither squandered his money nor hoarded it, because whenever funds were needed to support some noble, beneficial, or generous cause, he provided them quietly and even anonymously.

In a nutshell, nobody could be less sociable than this gentleman. He said as little as possible and his silence made him seem even more secretive. Even so, he lived his life in plain view, but since he always did the same things with mathematical predictability, people's imaginations were restless and on the lookout for something more.

Had he traveled extensively? Very likely, because nobody knew the map of the world better than he. No place was so remote that he didn't seem to have detailed knowledge of it. Sometimes—though in a few quick, clear words—he would correct the thousands of comments that flew around his club regarding some lost or missing explorer; he would pinpoint the most likely eventualities, and so frequently were his words borne out by future developments, he seemed almost clairvoyant. He must have been a man who had traveled everywhere, at least in his head.

All the same it was clear that Phileas Fogg hadn't been away from London in a good while. There were some who had the honor of knowing him a bit better than the rest of the world, and they swore that except for the direct route he traveled each day from his home to his club, nobody could ever claim they'd seen him anywhere else. His only pastimes were reading the newspapers and playing whist. This quiet game was well suited to his nature and he often won at it; however his winnings never went into his billfold but made up a sizeable part of his charitable contributions. Even so, we must note that Mr. Fogg clearly didn't play to win but for the pleasure of playing. He saw the game as a contest, a battle against a difficulty, but a battle that didn't involve moving around, shifting ground, or getting tuckered out, and this agreed with his personality.

As far as anybody knew, Phileas Fogg had neither wife nor children (which can happen to the most decent fellows), neither relatives nor friends (which is actually much rarer). Phileas Fogg lived alone in his house on Savile Row and nobody visited him. His home life never came into the picture. A single manservant was enough for his needs. He ate lunch and dinner at his club on a schedule that had been worked out with a chronometer, and he did so in the same dining room, at the same table, never entertaining colleagues, never inviting strangers to join him, and he went home to bed at the stroke of midnight without ever using the comfortable quarters the Reform Club puts at the disposal of select members. He spent just ten hours out of every twenty-four at his residence, either in sleeping or in getting groomed and dressed for the day ahead. Anytime he went for a stroll, it was with a steady step over the parquet floor of the club's lobby or down its circular hallway, which was topped by a dome that had blue-tinted windows and rested on twenty Ionic columns of red porphyry. When he ate lunch or dinner, the club's kitchens, larder, pantry, fish market, and dairy furnished his table with their sumptuous stores; the club's waiters—solemn individuals dressed in black and shod in slippers with padded soles—served his food on exclusive china and marvelous saxony table linen; the club's goblets came from a lost line of glass molds and held his sherry, his port, and his claret, which had been seasoned with cinnamon, maidenhair, and cassia; finally the club's ice—imported at major expense from America's lakes—kept his drinks satisfactorily chilled.

If this lifestyle can be called eccentric, you must admit that eccentricity has something going for it!

Though his home on Savile Row wasn't ostentatious, it still rated as tremendously comfortable. In addition, since its tenant's habits never varied, its upkeep made fewer demands. Even so, Phileas Fogg required his single manservant to be exceptionally punctual and reliable. On this very day, October 2, Phileas Fogg had just given the boot to James Forster (the fellow had been found guilty of heating his master's shaving water to 84° Fahrenheit instead of 86°) and was waiting for his replacement, who was supposed to show up between 11:00 and 11:30.

Sitting dead center in his armchair, two feet together like a soldier on dress parade, palms resting on knees, body erect, head held high, Phileas Fogg watched the hand moving on his wall clock—a complicated mechanism that marked the hour, minute, second, day, date, month, and year. When 11:30 chimed, Mr. Fogg was to leave home and make his way to the Reform Club in line with his daily schedule,

Just then somebody knocked on the door to the little parlor where Phileas Fogg was waiting.

His ex-employee James Forster appeared.

"The new manservant," he said.

A fellow of about thirty came in and bowed.

"You're from France," Phileas Fogg asked him, "and your name is John?"

"Jean, with all due respect, sir," the newcomer replied, "but my nickname is 'Jean Passepartout.'¹ I've lived up to it with my knack for handling tight situations, so the label has stuck. I think I'm a decent fellow, sir, but to be honest with you, I've been a jack-of-all-trades. I've worked as a wandering minstrel, a horseman in a circus, a trapeze artist like Léotard, and a tightrope walker like Blondin; after that, to make more profitable use of my talents, I became a gymnastics teacher and finally a sergeant in the Paris Fire Department. I've got some really notable blazes on my résumé. But I left France five years ago, wanted a taste of domestic bliss, and today earn my living in England as a personal valet. Now then, being out of work and hearing that Mr. Phileas Fogg was the most orderly and retiring gentleman in the United Kingdom, I've arrived on his doorstep in hopes of living a serene existence and forgetting the very name of Passepartout . . ."

"I'm comfortable calling you Passepartout," the gentleman replied. "You come recommended. I've received good reports on you. You know my requirements?"

"Yes, sir."

"Fine. What time do you have?"

"It's 11:22," Passepartout replied, tugging an enormous silver watch from the depths of his vest pocket.

"You're slow," Mr. Fogg said.

"Pardon me, sir, but that isn't possible."

"You're four minutes slow. Let it be. I've noted the discrepancy, enough said. Therefore, as of 11:29 this Wednesday morning, October 2, 1872, you're now in my employ."

1. *Translator's note.* French: "passkey." The literal meaning of *passepartout* is "gets through anything."




Jean Passepartout.

With that Phileas Fogg got up, took his hat in his left hand, put it on his head with a robotlike motion, and vanished without another word.

Passepartout heard the front door give a slam—it was his new master leaving; then a second slam—it was his predecessor James Forster going off in his turn.

They'd left Passepartout alone in the house on Savile Row.

2. WHERE PASSEPARTOUT IS CONVINCED HE HAS FOUND PERFECTION AT LAST

“e Gods,” Passepartout said to himself, a bit flabbergasted at first. “I’ve seen folks at Madame Tussaud’s with as much feeling in them as my new master!”

It’s appropriate to mention at this point that the “folks at Madame Tussaud’s” are wax figures, a major tourist attraction in London; the only thing they lack is the gift of speech.

During the few seconds in which he’d just caught a glimpse of Phileas Fogg, Passepartout had given his future master a quick but careful inspection. A man who might have been forty, his employer had fine aristocratic features, a tall figure not spoiled by a slight tummy, blond hair and side-whiskers, smooth brow and temples without a wrinkle in sight, pale rather than ruddy features, and magnificent teeth. To a supreme degree he seemed to have what physiognomists, those analysts of facial character, call “strength in repose,” a virtue typical of folks who value deeds more than words. With his stoic calm, clear eye, and unblinking alertness, he was an ideal example of those ultra composed Englishmen you come across so often in the United Kingdom, people whose slightly pedantic outlooks the portrait painter Angelica Kauffmann has captured so wonderfully with her brush. Seen in the various activities of his daily life, this gentleman gave the impression of being fully counterbalanced, meticulously aligned, as faultless as a chronometer manufactured by a master watchmaker like Leroy or Earnshaw. In essence Phileas Fogg was the soul of precision, which was clearly visible in “the language of his hands and feet,” because with both men and animals, the body parts themselves are instruments that can convey states of mind.

Phileas Fogg was one of those mathematically correct people who are never in a rush, always prepared, economical in their every step and movement. He never took a stride too many and always went by the shortest route. He didn’t stare off into space. He didn’t indulge in unnecessary actions. Nobody ever saw him excited or agitated. He was the least hurried person on earth, yet he always arrived on the dot. Even so, you can appreciate why he lived a solitary existence, an existence free of all social intercourse, as it were. He

knew that friction was a part of life, and since friction is time-consuming, he never rubbed anybody the wrong way.

As for Jean, dubbed Passepartout, he was a thoroughgoing Parisian who had moved to England five years earlier, had worked in London as a personal valet, and had searched in vain for a master to whom he could pledge his allegiance.

Passepartout wasn't like Frontin, Mascarille, or other stage servants in the popular French farces—high-handed, brazen-faced, wry-eyed rascals who shrug their shoulders and turn up their noses. Not at all. Passepartout was a gallant fellow with friendly features and rather full lips that were always game for a nibble or a kiss—a kindly, helpful person with one of those pleasant round noggins you like to see on a good friend's shoulders. He had blue eyes, lively coloring, a face chubby enough for him to see his own cheekbones, a broad chest, a strapping build, vigorous muscles, and that Herculean strength he'd developed so marvelously during his athletic youth. His brown hair was a little unruly. Though the sculptors of antiquity knew eighteen different ways of arranging Minerva's tresses, Passepartout knew only one way of dealing with his own: three swipes with a big-tooth comb and his grooming was done.

The most basic caution keeps us from saying whether a fellow with such an exuberant personality could get along with a man like Phileas Fogg. Would Passepartout be that stringently correct manservant his master required? The only way to find out was to put him to work. After a pretty unstable youth, as you know, he longed for peace and quiet. Hearing high praise for the methodical English and for the proverbial reserve of their gentlemen, he came to England to seek his fortune. But so far the fates had been against him. He hadn't been able to put down roots anywhere. He'd worked in ten homes. In all of them his employers had been wayward and temperamental, chasing after women or chasing off on joyrides, neither of which was acceptable to Passepartout these days. Young Lord Longsferry, a Member of Parliament and his latest master, spent his nights in Haymarket "oyster bars" and all too often came home slung over a policeman's shoulders. First and foremost Passepartout wanted a master he could respect, so he ventured a few polite comments; when these were poorly received, he quit. At this point he heard that Phileas Fogg, Esq., was looking for a manservant. He investigated the gentleman. An individual who led an orderly life, didn't sleep out, didn't travel, and never went away, not even for a day, would suit him down to the ground. He showed up and was hired under the circumstances you're acquainted with.

Eleven-thirty having chimed, Passepartout was alone in the house on Savile Row. He started to inspect it at once. He went over it from the cellar to the attic. It was a neat, clean, simple, straitlaced home laid out for easy upkeep, and it pleased him. It reminded him of a snail shell, but a high-class shell with both gaslight and a gas furnace, because carbureted hydrogen took care of all its heating and lighting needs. Passepartout had no difficulty finding the third-floor bedroom intended for him. It suited him perfectly. Electric bells and speaking tubes put him in contact with the rooms on the second and first floors. An electric clock stood on his mantel, synchronized with the clock in Phileas Fogg's bedroom, and the two timepieces ticked the same second at the same instant.

“This,” Passepartout said to himself, “is just what the doctor ordered!”

In his bedroom he also noted a memo tacked above the clock. It was a schedule of his daily responsibilities. Running from 8:00 in the morning, the official time for Phileas Fogg to get up, till 11:30 when he left home to go eat lunch at the Reform Club, this schedule covered his manservant’s duties in full detail—tea and toast at 8:23, shaving water at 9:37, hair care at 9:40, etc. Then, from 11:30 in the morning till midnight when the systematic gentleman went to bed, everything else was listed, anticipated, and spelled out. Passepartout took delight in studying this schedule and learning its different entries by heart.

As for his employer’s wardrobe, it was meticulously hung and wondrously thorough. Each vest, dress coat, and pair of trousers bore a serial number, which had been copied into a ledger that recorded their comings and goings and showed the date, depending on the season, when each piece of clothing was to be worn in its turn. Same protocol for shoes.

All in all this house on Savile Row—which must have been a haven of chaos in the days of the notoriously loose-living Sheridan—was furnished in a comfortable style that suggested substantial means. No library and no books, though—Mr. Fogg wouldn’t have had any use for them, since the Reform Club put two libraries at his disposal, one devoted to literature, the other to politics and the law. In his bedroom was a medium-sized safe, built to be both fireproof and theft-proof. There weren’t any weapons in the house, no implements for hunting game or waging war. Only the most peaceful intentions were in evidence.

After he’d given the dwelling a detailed inspection, Passepartout rubbed his hands, his broad face beaming, and he said over and over in delight:

“It’s a perfect fit! It’s right down my alley! We’ll get along famously, Mr. Fogg and I! He’s a homebody, an orderly man! A real piece of machinery! Well, it won’t pain me to have a domestic appliance for a master!”