

# THE GARDEN MURDER CASE

By S.S. VAN DINE

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### SYNOPSIS

Philo Vance, famous detective, and John F. X. Markham, district attorney for New York county, are dining in Vance's apartment when Vance receives an anonymous telephone message informing him of a "disturbing psychological tension at Professor Ephraim Garden's apartment" advising that he read up on radio-active sodium, consult a passage in the Aeneid and counseling that "Equanimity is essential." Professor Garden is famous in chemical research. The message, decoded by Vance, reminds him that Professor Garden's son Floyd and his young cousin, Woody Swift, are addicted to horse-racing. Vance says that "Equanimity" is a horse running next day in the Rivermont handicap. Vance is convinced that the message was sent by Dr. Siefert, the Gardens' family physician. He arranges to have lunch next day at the Gardens' penthouse. Vance is greeted by Floyd Garden and meets Lowe Hamble, an elderly follower of horse racing. Floyd expresses concern over Swift's queer actions. Mrs. Garden, supposedly ill, comes downstairs and places a \$100 bet on a horse. Gathered around an elaborate loud speaker service, listening to the racing are Cecil Kroon, Madge Weatherly and Zalia Graem, who bet varying amounts on the race. There is tension under the surface gaiety. Zalia and Swift are not on speaking terms. Kroon leaves to keep an appointment before the race starts. Miss Beeton, a nurse, and Vance bet on "Azure Star." Swift recklessly bets \$10,000 on "Equanimity" and goes to the roof garden to hear the results. Floyd follows Swift, remaining away several minutes. Zalia answers a phone call in the den.

### CHAPTER III—Continued

As the radio tubes warmed up, McElroy's well-known voice gained in volume over the loud speaker: ". . . and Equanimity is now making trouble at the post. Took the cue from Head Start . . . Now they're both back in their stalls—it looks as if we might get a—Yes! They're off! And to a good even start. Hyjinx has dashed into the lead; Azure Star comes next; and Heat Lightning is close behind. The others are bunched. I can't tell one from the other yet. Wait a second. Here they come past us—and it's Hyjinx on top now, by two lengths; and behind her is Train Time; and—yes, it's Sublimite, by a head, or a nose, or a neck—it doesn't matter—it's Sublimite anyway. And there's Risky Lad creeping up on Sublimite . . . And now they're going round the first turn, with Hyjinx still in the lead. The relative positions of the ones out front haven't changed yet . . . They're in the back stretch, and Hyjinx is still ahead by half a length; Train Time has moved up and holds his second position by a length and a half ahead of Roving Flirt, who's in third place. Azure Star is a length behind Roving Flirt. Equanimity is pocketed."

At this point in the broadcast Zalia Graem appeared suddenly in the archway and stood with her eyes fixed on the radio, her hands sunk in the pockets of her tailored jacket. ". . . They're rounding the far turn. Equanimity has improved his position and is getting into his famous stride. Hyjinx has dropped back and Roving Flirt has taken the lead by a head, with Train Time second, by a length, in front of Azure Star, who is running third and making a grand effort . . . And now they're in the stretch. Azure Star has come to the front and is a full length in the lead. Train Time is making a great bid for this classic and is still in second place, a length behind Azure Star. Roving Flirt is right behind him. Hyjinx has dropped back and it looks as if she was no longer a serious contender. Equanimity is pressing hard and is now in sixth place. He hasn't much time, but he's running a beautiful race and may come up front yet . . . And here they come to the finish. The leaders are straight out—there won't be much change. Just a second. Here they come . . . and . . . the winner is Azure Star by two lengths. Next is Roving Flirt. And a length behind him is Train Time. Upper Shelf finished fourth . . ."

"Not such a hot race," Miss Graem remarked with a toss of her head. "I'll just about break even . . . Now I'll go and finish my phone call." And she turned back down the hall.

Garden seemed ill at ease and, for the second time that afternoon, mixed himself a highball.

Just then Mrs. Garden bustled into the room.

"Don't tell me I'm too late!" she pleaded excitedly.

"All over but the O. K., mater," Garden informed her.

"And what did I do?" The woman came forward and dropped wearily into an empty chair.

"The usual," grinned Garden. "A Grand Score? Your noble steed didn't score at all. Condemned. But it's not official yet. We'll be getting the O. K. in a minute now."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Mrs. Garden despondently.

"Well," said Garden, "Mr. Vance, the eminent deposer of crimes and ponies, can now take a luxurious vacation. He's the possessor of thirty-six hundred and forty dollars—of which thirty-six dollars and forty cents goes to our dear nurse . . . And Woode, of course . . ." His voice trailed off.

"What did Woody do?" demanded Mrs. Garden, sitting up stiffly in her chair.

"I'm frightfully sorry, mater,"—her son groped for words—"but Woody didn't use his head. I tried to dissuade him, but it was no go . . ."

"Well, what did Woody do?" persisted Mrs. Garden.

Garden hesitated, and before he could formulate an answer, a paralyzing sound, like a pistol shot, broke the tense silence.

Vance was the first on his feet. His face was grim as he moved rapidly toward the archway. I followed him, and just behind came Garden. As I turned into the hallway I saw the others in the drawing-room get up and move forward.

As we hurried down the hall Zalia Graem opened the den door.

"What was that?" she asked, her frightened eyes staring at us.

"We don't know yet," Vance told her.

In the bedroom door, at the lower end of the hall, stood the nurse, with a look of inquiring concern on her otherwise placid face.

"You'd better come along, Miss Beeton," Vance said, as he started up the stairs two at a time. "You may be needed."

Vance swung into the upper corridor and stopped momentarily at the door on the right, which led out upon the roof. This door was still propped open, and after a hasty preliminary survey through it, he stepped quickly out into the garden.

The sight that met our eyes was not wholly unexpected. There, in the low chair which he had pointed out to us earlier that afternoon, sat Woode Swift, slumped down, with his head thrown back at an unnatural angle against the rattan head-rest, and his legs straight out before him. His eyes were open and staring; his lips were slightly parted; and his thick glasses were tilted forward on his nose.

In his right temple was a small ugly hole beneath which two or three drops of already coagulating blood had formed. His right arm hung limp over the side of the chair, and on the colored tiling just under his hand lay a small pearl-handled revolver.

Vance immediately approached the motionless figure, and the rest of us crowded about him. Zalia Graem, who had forced her way forward and was now standing beside Vance, swayed suddenly and caught at his arm. Her face had gone pale, and her eyes appeared glazed. Vance turned quickly and, putting his arm about her, half led and half carried her to a large wicker divan nearby. He made a beckoning motion of his head to Miss Beeton.

"Look after her for a moment," he requested. "And keep her head down." Then he returned to Swift. "Every one please keep back," he ordered. "No one is to touch him."

He took out his monocle and adjusted it carefully. Then he leaned over the crumpled figure in the chair. He cautiously scrutinized the wound, the top of the head, and the tilted glasses. When this examination was over he knelt down on the tiling and seemed to be searching for something. Apparently he did not find what he sought, for he stood up with a discouraged frown and faced the others.

"Dead," he announced, in an unwontedly sombre tone. "I'm taking charge of things temporarily."

For a brief moment Vance stood in thought. Then: "You will all be so good as to go downstairs and remain there until further orders."

"But what are you going to do, Mr. Vance?" asked Mrs. Garden in a frightened tone. "We must keep this thing as quiet as possible . . . My poor Woody!"

"I'm afraid, madam, we shall not be able to keep it quiet at all," Vance spoke with earnest significance. "My first duty will be to telephone the district attorney and the homicide bureau."

Mrs. Garden gasped.

"The district attorney? The Homicide bureau?" she repeated distractedly. "Oh, no . . . Why must you do that? Surely, any one can see that the poor boy took his own life."

Vance shook his head slowly.

"I regret madam," he said, "that this is not a case of suicide . . . It's murder!"

Following Vance's unexpected announcement there was a sudden silence. Every one moved reluctant-

ly toward the door to the passageway. Only Garden remained behind.

"Is there a telephone up here?" Vance asked.

"Yes, certainly," replied Garden. Here's one in the study."

Garden brushed past us with nervous energy, as if glad of the opportunity for action. He threw open the door at the end of the passageway and stood aside for us to enter the study.

"Over there," he said, pointing to the desk at the far end of the room, on which stood a hand telephone. "That's an open line. No connection with the one we use for the ponies, though it's an extension of the phone in the den." He stepped swiftly behind the desk and threw a black key on the switch box that was attached to the side of the desk. "By leaving the key in this position, you are disconnected from the extension downstairs, so that you have complete privacy."

"Oh, quite," Vance nodded with a faint smile. "I use the same system in my own apartment. Thanks awfully for your thoughtfulness . . . And now please join the others downstairs and try to keep things balanced for a little while—there's a good fellow."

Garden took his dismissal with good grace and went toward the door.

"Oh, by the way, Garden," Vance called after him, "I'll want a little chat with you in private, before long."

Garden turned, a troubled look on his face.

"I suppose you'll be wanting me to rattle all the family skeletons for you? But that's all right. When you're ready for me you've only to press that buzzer on the bookshelves there, just behind the desk." He indicated a white push-button set flush in the center of a small square japanned box on the upright

his fingers, and it swung inward slowly and ponderously.

"Deuced queer," he commented. "A vault for preserving valuable documents—and the door unlocked. I wonder . . ."

### CHAPTER IV

The lights from the hall shone into the dark recess of the vault, and as Vance pushed the door further inward a white cord hanging from a ceiling light became visible. To the end of this cord was attached a miniature brass pestle, which acted as a weight. Vance stepped immediately inside and jerked the cord, and the vault was flooded with light.

"Vault" hardly describes this small storeroom, except that the walls were unusually thick, and it had obviously been constructed to serve as a burglar-proof repository. The room was about five by seven feet, and the ceiling was as high as that of the hallway. The walls were lined with deep shelves from floor to ceiling, and these were piled with all manner of papers, documents, pamphlets, filing cases, and racks of test-tubes and vials labeled with mysterious symbols. Three of the shelves were devoted to a series of sturdy steel cash and security boxes. The floor was overlaid with small squares of black and white ceramic tile.

Although there was ample room for us both inside the vault, I remained in the hallway, watching Vance as he looked about him.

Vance leaned over and picked up a batch of scattered typewritten papers which had evidently been brushed down from one of the shelves directly opposite the door. He glanced at them for a moment and carefully replaced them in the empty space on the shelf.

"Rather interesting," this disclaimer, he observed.

"The professor was obviously not the last person in here, or he would certainly not have left his papers on the floor . . ." He wheeled about. "My word!" he exclaimed in a low tone. "These fallen papers and that unlatched door . . . It could be, don't you know?" There was a suppressed excitement in his manner. "I say, Van, don't come in here; and, above all, don't touch this door-knob."

He knelt down on the tiled floor and began a close inspection of the small squares, as if he were counting them. His action reminded me of the way he had inspected the tiling on the roof near the chair in which we had found young Swift. It occurred to me that he was seeking here what he had failed to find in the garden.

"It should be here," he murmured. "It would explain many things—it would form the first vague outline of a workable pattern . . ."

After searching about for a minute or two, he stopped abruptly and leaned forward eagerly. Then he took a small piece of paper from his pocket and adroitly flicked something out of it from the floor. Folding the paper carefully, he tucked it away in his waistcoat pocket. Although I was only a few feet from him, I could not see what it was that he had found.

"I think that will be all for the moment," he said, rising and pulling the cord to extinguish the light. Coming out into the hallway, he closed the vault door by carefully grasping the shank of the knob. Then he moved swiftly down the passageway, stepped through the door to the garden, and went directly to the dead man. Though his back was turned to me as he bent over the figure, I could see that he took the folded paper from his waistcoat pocket and opened it. He glanced repeatedly from the paper in his hand to the limp figure in the chair. At length he nodded his head emphatically, and rejoined me in the hallway. We descended the stairs to the apartment below.

Just as we reached the lower hall, the front door opened and Cecil Kroon entered. He seemed surprised to find us in the hall, and asked somewhat vaguely, as he threw his hat on a bench: "Anything the matter?"

Vance studied him sharply and made no answer; and Kroon went on: "I suppose the big race is over, damn it! Who won it—Equanimity?"

Vance shook his head slowly, his eyes fixed on the other.

"Azure Star won the race. I believe Equanimity came in fifth or sixth."

"And did Woody go in on him up to the hilt, as he threatened?"

Vance nodded. "I'm afraid he did."

"Good Gad!" Kroon caught his breath. "That's a blow for the chap. How's he taking it?"

He looked away from Vance as if he would rather not hear the answer.

"He's not taking it," Vance returned quietly. "He's dead."

"No!" Kroon sucked in his breath with a whistling sound, and his eyes slowly contracted. "So he shot himself, did he?"

Vance's eyebrows went up slightly.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

### Early Counterfeit Money

In the United States between 1880 and 1890, apparently thousands of small town "slikers" bought and passed counterfeit money, says a writer in Collier's Weekly. One Reed Waddell, operating in New York, made \$250,000 during this decade by selling "green goods" throughout the country at the rate of \$12 for \$1, boldly advertising his currency to a preferred list through letters, circulars and even elaborate booklets.

# POULTRY

## IODINE IS NEEDED BY EARLY CHICKS

### Common Feeds May Not Have Proper Amount.

Iodine is necessary for chicks, but is needed only in very small amounts, according to a writer in the Wisconsin Agriculturist. Common feeds such as oyster shell, grains, etc., will usually supply all of the iodine that the chicks need but as a precaution it is desirable to add very small amounts to the ration. This can be done easily by using an iodized stock salt. Certain sea weeds and some of the fish meal preparations are quite abundantly supplied with iodine but repeated trials have not shown any advantage for these materials. Ordinary mixtures apparently contain all the iodine that chicks need so it is not necessary to bring in the high priced products that are rich in iodine nor is it necessary to put iodine tablets in the drinking water.

For many years leg weakness, or rickets, has been the most serious difficulty in raising chicks. The addition of mineral feeds such as limestone grit and raw bone grits increases the amount of bone building minerals so that early chicks can be grown for the first few weeks without sunshine or any other source of vitamin D, but no mineral combination has as yet been discovered that makes it possible to raise normal inside chicks unless vitamin D is added. Three generations of inside chicks were raised without difficulty when vitamin D was added to the ration fortified with mineral in the form of limestone grit and raw bone.

## How the Feed Produces Different Meat Quality

Each of the basic cereals—corn, wheat, oats, and barley—if fed alone, produces a different quality in the meat of poultry, says a writer in the Montreal Herald. Such differences are due to the way in which the fat is produced in the different parts of the body. An even distribution of fat throughout the body, flesh and skin, is essential to high quality. The mixed cereals, plus milk, produce a high quality meat on an economical basis.

The character and amount of the rations fed will largely influence the gains in live weight. The amount of protein in the ration does not necessarily indicate the value in possible live weight gains to be made. Neither does the amount of fat in the average fattening ration supply all the fat produced on the bird fed. It is common knowledge that the large deposits of fat which occur in the animal body must owe their formation, in a large part, to other constituents of the feed than the fat content. In many finishing rations the low fat content cannot account for the high percentage of fat in the finished carcass. Recent biochemical work has shown that certain of the decomposition products of carbohydrates may be utilized in this synthesis of fat. The carbohydrate of the ration, in excess of that used for immediate heat and energy, is converted to fat and stored in deposits for later utilization.

## Watch Drafts

Rains and cooler nights make it necessary that the farm poultryman take particular precautions to avoid drafts in pullet and laying houses. If the birds come into the house wet and are crowded, drafts are practically sure to result in fall colds and roup. Mature birds should have one foot of roost space per bird and pullets should have proportionate space as they mature. Green feed is essential in preventing colds and it can be used liberally. Removal of low vitality birds will decrease the danger of disease and colds throughout the winter, since the weaker pullets take cold more easily and become a constant source of infection.—Prairie Farmer.

## Color of the Eggshell

Early in 1900 a New York experiment station, after a careful analysis, failed to uphold the tradition that the eggshell indicated or made any difference in egg quality. However, though the color of the hen's egg only designates the breed of chicken, it is true that eggs have been found to vary slightly in nutritive value. This variation comes from the color of the shell, but because of feed. Eggs of the same breed of chicken will vary as much, if not more, than those from different breeds.

## Counting the Chickens

The first national chicken census is now in progress, the Department of Agriculture doing the counting. It is believed that there are 400,000,000 hens on our more than 6,000,000 American farms and that the average hen lays ninety eggs a year. Doubtless there are a lot of lazy hens that bring the average down. Knowing more about our chicken population, before and after they are hatched, will be of value, says the Country Home Magazine.

## Showing Three New Styles



YOU who sew-your-own will be more enthusiastic than ever after making realities of these three new styles. Each is truly a delightful fashion and best of all there's something for every size in the family—from the "little bear" right on up.

Pattern 1997 is the smartly styled smock that probably has an option on a little portion of your heart right now. Fair enough, follow the dictates of your heart and you can't go wrong. This little wardrobe nicety will serve you becomingly and well. It will add to your comfort too. Make it of broadcloth, gingham, sateen or chintz for prettiness and easy maintenance. There is a choice of long or short sleeves and the shiny gold buttons offer just the sort of spicy contrast one likes in informal apparel. Available for sizes 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42 and 44. Size 34 requires 3 1/2 yards of 39 inch material.

Pattern 1204—This new day frock for sizes 36 to 52 is the

final word in style and charm in any woman's language. To do this flattering fashion is to step blithely into the realm of high fashion. The soft feminine collar is most becoming and it serves as an excellent medium for contrast. The sleeve length is optional. Slender lines are the main feature of the skirt and a very pleasant effect results from the wide and handsome flare. Satin or sheer wool would most assuredly win your friends' approval and perhaps just a little of their envy. This pattern is designed for sizes 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50 and 52. Size 38 requires 4 1/2 yards of 39 inch material. Less with short sleeves. The collar in contrast requires 3/8 yard.

The adorable little number for Miss Two-To-Eight, Pattern 1994, is surely without competition in the way of downright intrigue. Why not do things up right and cut this model twice—panties too, naturally—using sheer wool for the "best" occasion frock and gingham or seersucker for school, play and all-purpose use? Pattern 1994 is available in sizes 2, 4, 6 and 8 years. Size 4 requires 2 1/2 yards of 39 inch material plus 1/4 yard of bias binding for trimming.

Send for the Barbara Bell Fall and Winter Pattern Book containing 100 well-planned, easy-to-make patterns. Exclusive fashions for children, young women, and matrons. Send fifteen cents in coins for your copy.

Send your order to The Sewing Circle Pattern Dept., 387 W. Adams St., Chicago, Ill. Price of patterns, 15 cents (in coins) each. © Bell Syndicate.—WNU Service.

## Prize-winning Recipes of the South



### ORANGE PECAN WAFFLES

Mrs. W. D. Cook, Atlanta, Ga.

Sift together 1 1/2 cups flour, 1/2 tsp. salt, 1 tsp. sugar, and 4 tps. baking powder. Combine 4 tps. melted Jewel Special-Blend Shortening, 3 eggs slightly beaten, 1 cup milk and 1 tsp. orange marmalade. Add, all at once, to dry ingredients and stir until smooth. Last, add 1/2 cup pecans, finely chopped. Put mixture, about 3 tps. at a time, on a hot waffle iron and cook until done. Serve with Orange Fluff.

Orange Fluff.—Beat 1/2 pint of cream till firm then stir in 1 tsp. of sugar and 1 of orange marmalade.—Adv.



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By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

