



# 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 tenor at Professor 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 puny cousin, Woodie, 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 Hammie, 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.

CHAPTER II—Continued

When the two instruments and the amplifier had been stationed and tested, Sneed brought in four more card-tables and placed them about the drawing-room. At each table he opened up two folding chairs. Then, from a small drawer in the stand, he took out a long manila envelope which had evidently come through the mail, and, slitting the top, drew forth a number of large printed sheets approximately nine by sixteen inches. There were 15 of these sheets—called "cards" in racing parlance—and after sorting them he spread out three on each of the card-tables.

When the butler had gone Garden lifted the receiver from the hook of the telephone and dialed a number. After a pause he spoke into the transmitter:

"Hello, Lex. B-2-9-8. Waiting for the dope." And, laying the receiver down on the stand, he threw the switch key forward.

A clear-cut, staccato voice came through the amplifier: "O. K., B-2-9-8." Then there was a click, followed by several minutes of silence. Finally the same voice began speaking: "Everybody get ready. The exact time now is one-thirty and a quarter.—Three tracks today. The order will be Rivermont, Texas, and Cold Springs. Just as you have them on the cards. Here we go. Rivermont: weather clear and track fast. Clear and fast. First post, 2:30. And now down the line—"

Garden leaned over and threw the amplifier switch up, and there was silence in the room. He turned to his cousin. "Why don't you take Vance and Mr. Van Dine upstairs, and show them around the garden? . . . They might," he added with good-natured sarcasm, "be interested in your lonely retreat on the roof, where you listen in to your fate. Sneed has probably got it arranged for you."

Swift rose with alacrity. "Damned glad of the chance," he returned surlily. "Your manner to-day rather annoys me, Floyd." And he led the way down the hall and up the stairs to the roof-garden. Vance and I following.

The stairway was narrow and semicircular, and led upward from the hallway near the front entrance. In glancing back up the hall, toward the drawing-room, I noticed that no section of that room was visible from the stair end of the hall. I made this mental note idly at the time, but I mention it here because the fact played a very definite part in the tragic events which were to follow.

At the head of this narrow stairway we turned left into a corridor, barely four feet wide, at the end of which was a door leading into a large room—the only room on the roof. This spacious and beautifully appointed study, with high windows, on all four sides, was used by Professor Garden, Swift informed us, as a library and private experimental laboratory. Near the door to this room, on the left wall of the corridor, was another door, of calamine, which, I learned later, led into a small storeroom built to hold data.

Half-way down the corridor, on the right, was another large calamine weather door which led out to the roof. This door had been propped open, for the sun was bright and the day mild. Swift preceded us into one of the loveliest skyscraper gardens I have ever seen.

We walked leisurely about the garden, smoking. Swift was a difficult man to talk to, and as the minutes went by he became more and more distant. After a while he glanced apprehensively at his wrist-watch.

"We'd better be going down," he said. "They'll be coming out for the first race before long."

Vance gave him an appraising look and rose.

"What about that sanctum sanctorum of yours which your cousin mentioned?" he asked lightly.

"Oh, that . . ." Swift forced an embarrassed smile. "It's that red chair over there against the wall, next to the small table . . . But I don't see why Floyd should spoof about it. The crowd downstairs always rags me when I lose, and it irritates me. I'd much rather be alone when I get the results."

"Quite understandable," nodded Vance with sympathy. "You see," the man went on rather pathetically, "I frankly play the ponies for the money—the others downstairs can afford to take heavy losses, but I happen to need the cash just now."

Vance had stepped over to the little table on which stood a desk telephone which had, instead of the ordinary receiver, what is known as a head receiver—that is, a flat disk ear-phone attached to a curved metal band to go over the head.

"Your retreat is well equipped," commented Vance. "Oh, yes. This is an extension of the news-service phone downstairs; and there's also a plug-in for a radio, and another for an electric plate."

He took the ear-phone from the hook and, adjusting the band over his head, listened for a moment.

"Nothing new yet at Rivermont," he mumbled. He removed the ear-phone with nervous impatience and tossed it to the table. "Anyway we'd better get down." And he walked toward the door by which we had come out in the garden.

When we reached the drawing-room we found two newcomers—a man and a woman—seated at one of the tables, poring over the racing cards and making notations. Vance and I were casually introduced to them by Garden.

The man was Cecil Kroon, about thirty-five, immaculately attired and sleek, with smooth, regular features and a very narrow waxed mustache. He was quite blond, and his eyes were a cold steely blue. The woman, whose name was Nadge Weatherby; was about the same age as Kroon, tall and slender, and with a marked tendency toward theatricalism in both her attire and her make-up. Her cheeks were heavily rouged and her lips crimson. Her eyelids were shaded with green, and her eyebrows had been plucked and replaced with fine penciled lines.

Garden looked up and motioned to us—he was holding the receiver of the black telephone to his ear. Kroon went to the small bar and mixed two drinks which he took back to his table, setting one down before Miss Weatherby.

"I say, Floyd," he called out to Garden, "Zalia coming today?" "Absolutely," Garden told him. "She was all stirred up when she phoned this morning. Full of sure things."

"Well, what about it?" came a vivacious feminine voice from down the hall; and the next moment a swaggering, pretty girl was standing in the archway, her hands on her muscular boyish hips. "I've concluded I can't pick any winners myself, so why not let the other guy pick 'em for me? . . . Hello, everybody," she threw in parenthetically. "But Floyd, old thing, I really have a humdinger in the first at Rivermont today. This tip didn't come from a stable-boy, either. It came from the steward—a friend of dad's. And am I going to smear that hay-burner!"

"Right-o, Baby-face," grinned Garden. "Step into our parlor." She started forward, and hesitated momentarily as she caught sight of Vance and me.

"Oh, by the way, Zalia,"—Garden put the receiver down and rose—"let me present Mr. Vance and Mr. Van Dine . . . Miss Graem."

The girl staggered back dramatically and lifted her hands to her head in mock panic.

"Oh, Heaven protect me!" she exclaimed. "Philo Vance, the detective! Is this a raid?" Vance bowed graciously.

"Have no fear, Miss Graem," he smiled. "I'm merely a fellow criminal. And, as you see, I'm dragging Mr. Van Dine along the downward path with me."

At this moment Garden pressed forward the key on the switch box, and in a moment the voice we had heard earlier was again coming through the amplifier.

"Coming out at Rivermont, and here's the new line: 20, 6, 4, 8 to 5 scratch twice, 3, 20, 15, 10, 15 . . . Who was it wanted the run-down at Texas—?"

Garden cut the amplifier. He turned to his cousin. "And you, Woody?" Swift shook his head. "Not this race."

"Saving it all for Equanimity, eh? Right-o."

Despite the superficial buoyancy of the gathering, I could detect an undercurrent of extreme tension and expectancy; and I made mental note of various little occurrences during the first hour or so.

One incident connected with Swift puzzled me greatly. I had noticed that he and Zalia Graem had not spoken to each other during the entire time they had been in the drawing-room. Once they had brushed against each other near Garden's table, and each, as if instinctively, had drawn resentfully to one side. Garden had cocked his head at them irritably and said:

"Aren't you two on speaking terms yet—or is this feud to be permanent? . . . Why don't you kiss and make up and let the gaiety of the party be unanimous?"

Miss Graem had proceeded as if nothing had happened, and Swift had merely given his cousin a quick, indignant glance.

CHAPTER III

"The great moment approaches!" Garden announced, and though he spoke with sententious gaiety, I could detect signs of strain in his manner.

Kroon rose, finished the drink which stood on the table before him, and dabbing his mouth with a neatly folded handkerchief which he took from his breast pocket, he moved toward the archway.

"My mind was made up yesterday," he spoke across the room, as if including every one. "Put me down in your fateful little book for \$100 on Hyjinx to win and \$200 on the same filly to place. And you can add \$200 on Head Start to show. Making it, all told, half a grand. That's my contribution to the afternoon's festivities."

"Not deserting us, are you Cecil?" Garden called after him. "Frightfully sorry," Kroon answered, looking back. "I'd love to stay for the race, but a legal conference at a maiden aunt's is scheduled for 4:50." He waved his hand and, with a "Cheerio," continued down the hall.

Madge Weatherby immediately picked up her cards and moved to



The Two Women Began a Low, Whispered Conversation.

Zalia Graem's table, where the two women began a low, whispered conversation.

Garden's inquiring glance moved from one to another of the party. At this moment a young woman of unusual attractiveness appeared in the archway and stood there hesitatingly, looking shyly at Garden.

She wore a nurse's uniform of immaculate white, with white shoes and stockings, and a starched white cap set at a grotesque angle on the back of her head. She could not have been over thirty; yet there was a maturity in her calm, brown eyes, and evidence of great capability in the reserve of her expression and in the firm contour of her chin. She wore no make-up, and her chestnut hair was parted in the middle and brushed back simply over her ears.

She presented a striking contrast to the two other women in the room. "Hello, Miss Beeton," Garden greeted her pleasantly. "I thought you'd be having the afternoon off, since the mater's well enough to go shopping . . . What can I do for you? Care to join the madhouse and hear the races?"

"Oh, no. I've too many things to do." She moved her head slightly to indicate the rear of the house. "But if you don't mind, Mr. Garden," she added timidly, "I would like to bet two dollars on Azure Star to win, and to come in second, and to come in third."

Every one smiled covertly, and Garden chuckled.

Vance, who had been watching the girl with more interest than he usually showed in a woman, leaned forward.

"I say, Garden, just a moment." He spoke incisively. "I think Miss Beeton's choice is an excellent one—however she may have arrived at it." Then he nodded to the nurse. "Miss Beeton, I'll be very happy to see that your bet on Azure Star is placed." He turned again to Garden. "Will your book-maker take \$200 across the board on Azure Star?"

"Will he? He'll grab it with both hands," Garden replied. "But why—?"

"Then it's settled," said Vance quickly. "That's my bet. And two dollars of it in each position belongs to Miss Beeton."

"That's perfect with me, Vance." And Garden jotted down the wager in his ledger.

I noticed that during the brief moments that Vance was speaking to the nurse and placing his wager on Azure Star, Swift was glowering at him through half-closed eyes. It was not until later that I understood the significance of that look.

The nurse cast a quick glance at Swift, and then spoke with simple directness.

"You are very kind, Mr. Vance." Then she added: "I will not pretend I don't know who you are, even if Mr. Garden had not called you by name." She stood looking straight at Vance with calm appraisal; then she turned and went back down the hall.

Swift stood up and walked to the cabinet with its array of bottles. He filled a whiskey glass with Bourbon and drank it down. Then he walked slowly to the table where his cousin sat. Garden had just finished the call to Hannix.

"I'll give you my bet now, Floyd," Swift said hoarsely. He pressed one finger on the table, as if for emphasis. "I want \$10,000 on Equanimity to win."

Garden's eyes moved anxiously to the other.

"I was afraid of that, Woody," he said in a troubled tone. "But if I were you—"

"I'm not asking you for advice," Swift interrupted in a cold steady voice; "I'm asking you to place a bet."

Garden did not take his eyes from the man's face. He said merely: "I think you're a damned fool."

"Your opinion of me doesn't interest me either." Swift's eyelids drooped menacingly, and a hard look came into his set face.

Garden capitulated. "It's your funeral," he said, and turning his back on his cousin, he took up the gray hand set again and spun the dial with determination.

Swift walked back to the bar and poured himself another generous drink of Bourbon.

"Hello, Hannix," Garden said into the transmitter. "I'm back again, with an additional bet. Hold on to your chair or you'll lose your balance. I want ten grand on Equanimity to win . . . Yes, that's what I said: ten G-strings—ten thousand iron men. Can you handle it? Odds probably won't be over two to one . . . Right-o."

He replaced the receiver and tilted back in his chair just as Swift, headed for the hall, was passing him.

Garden, apparently deeply perturbed, kept his eyes on the retreating figure. Then, as if on sudden impulse, he stood up quickly and called out: "Just a minute, Woody. I want to say a word to you." And he stepped after him.

I saw Garden put his arm around Swift's shoulder as the two disappeared down the hall.

When Garden returned to the room his face was a trifle pale, and his eyes were downcast. As he approached our table he shook his head dejectedly.

"I tried to argue with him," he remarked to Vance. "But it was no use; he wouldn't listen to reason. He turned nasty . . . Poor devil if Equanimity doesn't come in he's done for." He looked directly at Vance. "I wonder if I did the right thing in placing that bet for him. But, after all, he's of age."

A bell rang somewhere in the apartment, and a few moments later Sneed appeared in the archway. "Pardon me, sir," he said to Garden, "but Miss Graem is wanted on the other telephone."

Zalia Graem stood up quickly and raised one hand to her forehead in a gesture of dismay.

"Who on earth or in the waters under the earth can that be?" Her face cleared. "Oh, I know." Then she stepped up to Sneed. "I'll take the call in the den." And she hurried from the room.

Garden a few moments later turned in his chair and announced: "They're coming out at Rivermont. Say your prayers, gentlemen . . ."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Black Cat Superstitions Found in Many Sections

Tales of black cats are not confined to European countries; there are plenty found all through the states. Most of us are familiar with the black cat crossing the path, etc., notes a writer in the Los Angeles Times, but in the Middle West there is an old saying that "the skin of a black cat worn in the clothing will cure rheumatism." Another belief is that the blood of a black cat is a sure cure for shingles, and the same treatment is a remedy for hives. In the South the negro's superstitions include the black cat as a cure for consumption. Three hairs from a black cat's tail are sufficient to relieve a boil and a sty may be treated by brushing it nine times with a black cat's tail.

There are any number of superstitions regarding the weather. If a cat washes its face before breakfast it may mean rain, if it sits with its back toward the fire it may mean frost, if the fur is shiny the weather will be good. Another amusing story is that a cat sneezing on the wedding day is a good omen for the bride; if a kitten comes to the home in the forenoon it will bring good luck with it. In Scotland, if a black cat walks into the house, it brings the best with him. If one should kill the animal he will suffer reverses of fortune for a period of nine years.

Lace Is in Every Phase of Fashion

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



THE story of lace continues to unfold enchantment to an admiring world. It is not only that than lace there is nothing lovelier with which to adorn as an expression of the "eternal feminine" but the significant thing we are coming to learn about lace is that in many of its modernized types it is absolutely practical for general wear.

Through convincing demonstration in present-day fashions the theory has been utterly done away with that lace is a luxury to be reserved for "occasions" only. The following might seem merely a pretty fairy tale to entertain. It is, however, a really and truly true story which has to do with the recent arrival from Paris of a prominent American who brought with her a perfectly exquisite and thoroughly practical wardrobe fashioned all of lace. Of course this collection embraced laces of versatile type for the lingerie as well as sports and evening clothes are each and every one of lace. The thrill uttermost and the argument conclusive as to the practicality of lace is a raincoat of handsome close-woven waterproofed lace. We hasten to assure that the raincoat has been put to the test time and time again, proving to be water repellent, and a sure protection.

To be sure, every worthy tale must have a moral or deliver a message and here it is—the happy possessor of this most charming and replete lace wardrobe is telling her friends that for travel lace clothes are eminently practical and satisfactory. Not only does lace prove flattering at all times but a vitally important thing about lace clothes is that pack them as hurriedly as you may they come out unwrinkled, maintaining a well groomed appearance without the necessity of pressing.

There is no end to the types of lace now available. You will find a lace tuned to your every need

and to every mood of fashion. In the lace story for winter, it is the daytime dress made of wool lace that is making the headlines. A stunning model is pictured in the foreground of the illustration. It is of suede-finished brown wool lace in a heavy fabric type which makes the perfect thing for daytime street wear. To trim this handsome frock, Piquet uses a stitched sheer fabric woven of wool the same as made the lace, bordering the square neck, for the sash belt and to finish the side seams. We venture to predict you'll be deciding on a wool lace frock for your "fashion-first" this winter.

You can see from the beguiling dance frock shown to the right that designers are doing delightfully original things with lace. Chanel's evening and dinner dresses in ankle-length were a feature of her recent showings in Paris. She has a particularly charming dress as pictured with a dipping hemline starting from the ankles in front, done in Chantilly lace in pink and in black. The tiers of the skirt are matched by the cap sleeves in alternating ruffles of pink and black.

The dress illustrated to the left was one of the hits in the Lelong collection, and considered by him one of the best of his creations. He did it in several fabrics, including lace. For the lovely gown here shown he used one of the lovely filmy laces now so modish in an interesting delicate patterning. The feature of the pleated sleeves is also carried out in the little black peplum which stands out in quaint bustle effect. The girlish is matching suede.

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REVERSIBLE CAPE

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



Complete tweed ensembles are excellent style. The model done in a Creed masterpiece picture in terms of select wool weave such as declares its style supremacy. The cape is made reversible, which is a feature to be commended as it adds to the adaptability of the ensemble to occasion. Tailored outfits of this type, with jacket suit and top cape, are a whole wardrobe in one.

RED IS IN FAVOR FOR EVENING WEAR

By CHERIE NICHOLAS

The fashionable set literally "saw red" at the brilliant first night functions of the winter season. Red velvet wraps, gowns of red taffeta and slipper satin, the gleam of red in nails and lips—the shades varied all the way from the subtle smoky reds to the brighter tones of ruby, coronation and brighter, or orange red.

Particularly effective is a red velvet gown, ermine-trimmed and worn with a white ermine wrap, and an artful Julie cap or red over sleek blonde hair. The sleeves were long and bound with ermine at the wrists. An ankle-length wrap of faille taffeta in mountie red, very slim of waist and broad of shoulder was worn by a striking brunette.

Muffs are worn demurely small or large and debonair. A girl in bouffant black net under a slim black velvet wrap carried a large muff of white ermine tails, decorated with a spray of gardenias.

All-black splashed with color is again repeated and is second in favor to the predominating red.

Lamb-Trimmed Tunics

Three importantly dressed women recently observed at Longchamps wore tunic wool costumes, with the silhouette marked by Persian lamb borders. One coat by Jodelle used also a wide border of the lamb for a bib-like front collar.

High Hats

New highs are marked by many new hats. A youthful mode by Agnes is of black antelope, draped and twisted to a high-point cone held by three long royal blue coq feathers.



Woes Scored  
Mother (to small daughter who has returned from tea with friends)—I hope you said "No, thank you," oftener than "Yes, thank you."

Little Mary—Yes, I did. I hadn't been eating more than half an hour before they began saying, "Don't you think you've eaten enough?" And I said "No, thank you," every time.

Proof  
Father was sitting in the armchair when his little son came in and showed him a new penknife which he said he had found in the street.

"Are you sure it was lost?" inquired his father.  
"Of course it was lost. I saw the man looking for it!" replied the youngster.

HARD ON HIM



"Sad about Brown—an embezzler, and in broken health, too."  
"Doctor's fault; gave him iron for his blood and it made him steal."

'Twas Her Treat  
"Angus, ma son, treat ye bein' out wi' that lassie again?"  
"Aye, father, but why are ye worried?"  
"Ah wis wonderin' hoo much it cost ye."  
"Juist twa shillings an' four-r-pence."  
"Ah, that wis no sae bad!"  
"It wis a' she had, father."

Need of the Masses  
Park Orator: "My friends, if we were to turn and look ourselves squarely in the face, what should we find we needed most?"  
Voice from the crowd: "A rubber neck."

Worm's-Eye View  
Editor—What Jo you mean when you write "The statement is semi-official"?

Reporter—Mrs. Gibson wouldn't talk, so I got the story from her husband!—Philadelphia Bulletin.

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