



# THE GARDEN MURDER CASE

By S.S. VAN DINE

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## CHAPTER XII—Continued

"And have Miss Beeton's subsequent observations been helpful to you, doctor?" asked Vance.

"No, I can't say that they have," Siefert admitted.

Vance was studying the tip of his cigarette. Presently he asked: "Has the nurse's presence in the house resulted in any information regarding the general situation here?"

"Nothing that I had not already known. In fact, her observations have merely substantiated my own conclusions. It's quite possible, too, that she herself may unwittingly have augmented the animosity between young Garden and Swift, for she has intimated to me once or twice a very strong suspicion that she is personally interested in Floyd Garden."

Vance looked up with augmented interest.

"What, specifically, has given you that impression, doctor?"

"Nothing specific," Siefert told him. "I have, however, observed them together on several occasions, and my impression was that some sentiment existed there."

The nurse appeared at the door at that moment to announce the arrival of the medical examiner, and Vance asked her to bring Doctor Doremus up to the study.

"I might suggest," said Siefert quickly, "that, with your consent, it would be possible to have the medical examiner accept my verdict of death due to an accidental overdose of barbital and avoid the additional unpleasantness of an autopsy."

"Oh, quite," Vance nodded. "That was my intention." He turned to the district attorney. "All things considered, Markham," he said "I think that might be best. There's nothing to be gained from an autopsy."

Markham nodded in reluctant acquiescence as Doremus was led into the room by Miss Beeton. After a brief interchange of explanations and comments Doremus readily agreed to Markham's suggestion.

Doctor Siefert rose and looked hesitantly at Vance. "You will not need me further, I trust."

"Not at the moment, doctor," Vance rose also and bowed formally. "We may, however, communicate with you later. . . . And, Miss Beeton, please sit down."

The girl came forward and seated herself in the nearest chair, as the men went down the passage-way.

"I don't mean to trouble you unduly, Miss Beeton," said Vance; "but we should like to have a first-hand account of the circumstances surrounding the death of Mrs. Garden."

"I wish there was something definite I could tell you," the nurse replied readily in a businesslike manner, "but all I know is that when I arose this morning, a little after seven, Mrs. Garden seemed to be sleeping quietly. After dressing I went to the dining-room and had my breakfast; and then I took a tray in to Mrs. Garden. She always had tea and toast at eight o'clock. It wasn't until I had drawn up the shades and closed the windows, that I realized something was wrong. I spoke to her and she didn't answer me; and when I tried to rouse her I got no response. I saw then that she was dead. I called Doctor Siefert at once, and he came over as quickly as he could."

"You sleep, I believe, in Mrs. Garden's room?"

The nurse inclined her head. "Yes, you see, Mrs. Garden frequently needed some small service in the night."

"Had she required your attention at any time during the night?"

"No. The injection Doctor Siefert gave her before he left her seemed to have quieted her and she was sleeping peacefully when I went out."

"You went out last night?"

"What time did you leave the house?" asked Vance.

"About nine o'clock. Mr. Floyd Garden suggested it, assuring me that he would be here and that he thought I needed a little rest."

"Had you no professional qualms about leaving a sick patient at such a time?"

"Ordinarily I might have had," the girl returned resentfully; "but Mrs. Garden had never shown me any consideration. She was the most selfish person I ever knew. Anyway, I explained to Mr. Floyd Garden about giving his mother a teaspoonful of the medicine if she should wake up and show any signs of restlessness. And then I went out into the park."

"At what time did you return, Miss Beeton?"

"It must have been about eleven," she told him.

"Mrs. Garden was asleep when you came in?"

The girl turned her eyes to Vance before answering.

"I—I thought—she was asleep," she said hesitantly. "Her color was all right. But perhaps—even then—"

"Yes, yes, I know," Vance put in quickly. "By the by, did you notice anything changed—anything, let us say, out of place—in the room, on your return?"

The nurse shook her head slowly. "No. Everything seemed the same to me. The windows and shades were just as I had left them, and—Wait, there was something. The glass I had left on the night-table with drinking water was empty. I refilled it before going to bed."

Vance looked up quickly. "And the bottle of medicine?"

"I didn't particularly notice that; but it must have been just as I had left it, for I remember a fleeting sense of relief because Mrs. Garden hadn't needed a dose of medicine."

## CHAPTER XIII

Vance seemed profoundly puzzled and said nothing for some time. Then he glanced up suddenly.

"How much light was there in the room?" he asked.

"Only a dim shaded night-light by my bed."

"In that case, you might conceivably have mistaken an empty bottle for one filled with a colorless fluid."

"Yes, of course," the nurse returned reluctantly. "That must have been the case. Unless . . ."

Her voice trailed off.

"Tell me, when did you discover that all the medicine was gone?" Vance asked.

"Shortly before Doctor Siefert arrived this morning. I moved the bottle when I was arranging the table, and realized it was empty."

"I think that will be all just now, Miss Beeton," Vance glanced at the girl somberly and then turned away. "Really, y' know, I'm deuced sorry. But you'd better not plan on leaving here just yet. We will undoubtedly want to see you again today."

Heath, who had been waiting in the passage-way for the girl's dismissal, came in to report that Siefert and Doremus had departed, and that Floyd Garden had made the necessary arrangements for the removal of his mother's body.

"And what do we do now, Mr. Vance?" Heath asked.

"Oh, we carry on, Sergeant," Vance was unusually serious. "I want to talk to Floyd Garden first. Send him up. And call one of your men; but stay on the job downstairs yourself till he arrives. We may get this affair cleared up today."

Footsteps sounded in the passage-way, and Floyd Garden entered the study. He appeared deeply shaken.

"I can't stand much today. What do you want?"

"We understand just how you feel," Vance said. "It was not my intention to bother you unnecessarily. But if we are to get at the truth, we must have your co-operation."

"Go ahead, then," Garden mumbled.

"We must have as many details as possible about last night. Did you expect guests come?"

Garden nodded cheerlessly. "Oh, yes. Zalia Graem, Madge Weatherby, and Kroon."

"Was there any one else here?"

"No, that was all."

"Which of your visitors arrived first?"

Garden took the pipe from his mouth and looked up swiftly.

"Zalia Graem. She came at half-past eight, I should say. Why?"

"Merely garnerin' facts," Vance replied indifferently. "And how long after Miss Graem came in did Miss Weatherby and Kroon arrive?"

"About half an hour. They came a few minutes after Miss Beeton had gone out."

Vance returned the man's steady scrutiny.

"What time did your guests depart?" he asked.

"A little after midnight. Sneed brought in sandwiches about half-past eleven. Then we had another round of highballs."

"Miss Beeton had returned by then, of course?"

"Yes, long before that. I heard her come in about eleven."

"And after your guests had gone, what did you do?"

"I sat up for half an hour or so, had another drink and a pipe; then I shut up the front of the house and turned in."

Vance lighted another cigarette, took several deep inhalations on it, and settled himself deeper in the chair.

"To go back a bit," he said casually. "The sleeping medicine Doc-

tor Siefert prescribed for your mother seems to constitute a somewhat crucial point in the situation. Did you have occasion to give her a dose of it while the nurse was out?"

Garden drew himself up sharply and set his jaw.

"No, I did not," he said through his teeth.

Vance took no notice of the change in the man's manner.

"The nurse, I understand, gave you explicit instructions about the medicine before she went out. Will you tell me exactly where this was?"

"In the hall," Garden answered with a puzzled frown. "Just outside the den door. I had left Zalia in the drawing-room and had gone to tell Miss Beeton she might go out for a while. I waited to help her on with her coat. It was then she told me what to do in case the mater woke up and was restless."

"And when she had gone you returned to the drawing-room?"

"Yes, immediately," Garden still looked puzzled. "That's exactly what I did. And a few minutes later Madge and Kroon arrived."

There was a short silence during which Vance smoked thoughtfully.

"Tell me, Garden," he said at length, "did any of your guests enter your mother's room last night?"

Garden's eyes opened wide: color came back into his face, and he sprang to his feet.

"God God, Vance! Zalia was in mother's room!"

Vance nodded slowly. "Very interesting. Yes, quite . . . I say, do sit down. Light your beastly pipe, and tell us about it."

Garden hesitated a moment. He laughed harshly and resumed his seat.

"Damn it! You take it lightly enough," he complained. "That may be the whole explanation."

"One never knows, does one?" Vance returned indifferently. "Carry on."

Garden had some difficulty getting his pipe going again.

"It must have been about ten o'clock," he said at length. "The mater rang the little bell she keeps



"I Saw That She Was Dead."

on the table beside her bed, and I was about to answer it when Zalia jumped up and said she would see what the mater wanted."

"And did you yourself go into your mother's room at any time during Miss Beeton's absence?"

"No, I did not!" Garden looked defiantly at Vance.

"And you're sure that no one else entered your mother's room during the nurse's absence?"

"Absolutely."

"And who was it," Vance went on, "that first suggested going home?"

Garden pondered the question.

"I believe it was Zalia."

Vance got up.

"Awfully good of you, Garden, to let us bother you with these queries at such a time," he said kindly. "We're deuced grateful. . . . You won't be leaving the house today?"

Garden shook his head as he too stood up.

"Hardly," he said. "I'll stay in with father. He's pretty well broken up."

Garden went morosely from the room.

When he had gone Vance stood for a moment in front of Markham, eyeing him with cynical good-nature.

"Not a nice case, Markham. As I said."

He moved toward the window and looked out. "But I have things pretty well in hand. The pattern is shaping itself perfectly. I've fitted together all the pieces, Markham—all but one. And I hold that piece too, but I don't know where it goes, or how it fits into the ensemble."

Markham looked up. "What's the piece that's bothering you, Vance?"

"Those disconnected wires on the buzzer. They bother me frightfully. I know they have a bearing on the terrible things that have been going on here. . . ." He turned from the window and walked up and down the room several times, his head down, his hands thrust deep into his pockets. "Why should those wires have been disconnected?" he murmured, as if talking to himself. "How could they have been related to Swift's death or to the shot we heard? There was no mechanism. No, I'm convinced of that. After all, the wires merely connect two buzzers. . . . a signal. . . . a signal between upstairs and downstairs. . . . a call—a line of communication. . . ."

Suddenly he stopped his meditative pacing. He was now facing

the door into the passage-way and he stared at it as if it were something strange—as if he had never seen it before.

"Oh, my aunt!" he exclaimed. "My precious aunt! It was too obvious." He wheeled about to Markham, a look of self-reproach on his face. "The answer was here all time," he said. "It was simple—and I was looking for complexities. . . . The picture is complete now, Markham. Everything fits. Those disconnected wires mean that there's another murder contemplated."

He led the way downstairs. Heath was smoking gloomily in the lower hall.

"Sergeant," Vance said to him, "phone Miss Graem, Miss Weatherby, Kroon—and Hammle. Have them all here late this afternoon—say six o'clock. Floyd Garden can help you in getting in touch with them."

"They'll be here, all right, Mr. Vance," Heath assured him.

"And Sergeant, as soon as you have taken care of this, telephone me. I want to see you this afternoon. I'll be at home. But wait here for Smitkin and leave him in charge. No one is to come here but those I've asked you to get, and no one is to leave the apartment. And, above all, no one is to be permitted to go upstairs either to the study or the garden. . . . I'm staggerin' along now."

"I'll be phoning you by the time you get home, Mr. Vance."

Vance went to the front door, but paused with his hand on the knob.

"I think I'd better speak to Garden about the gathering before I go. Where is he, Sergeant?"

"He went into the den when he came downstairs," Heath told him with a jerk of the head.

Vance walked up the hall and opened the den door. I was just behind him. As the door swung inward and Vance stepped over the threshold, we were confronted by an unexpected tableau. Miss Beeton and Garden were standing just in front of the desk, outlined against the background of the window. The nurse's hands were pressed to her face, and she was leaning against Garden, sobbing. His arms were about her.

At the sound of Vance's entry they drew away from each other quickly. The girl turned her head to us with a sudden motion, and I could see that her eyes were red and filled with tears. She caught her breath and, turning with a start, half ran through the connecting door into the adjoining bedroom.

"I'm frightfully sorry," Vance murmured. "Thought you were alone."

"Oh, that's all right," Garden returned, although it was painfully evident the man was embarrassed. "But I do hope, Vance, you won't misunderstand. Everything, you know, is in an emotional upheaval here. I imagine Miss Beeton had all she could stand yesterday and today, and when I found her in here she seemed to break down, and—put her head on my shoulder."

Vance raised his hand in good-natured indifference.

"Oh, quite, Garden. A harassed lady always welcomes a strong masculine shoulder to weep on. Most of them leave powder on one's lapel, don't y' know; but I'm sure Miss Beeton wouldn't be guilty of that. . . . Dashed sorry to interrupt you, but I wanted to tell you before I went that I have instructed Sergeant Heath to have all your guests of yesterday here by six o'clock this afternoon. Of course, we'll want you and your father here, too. If you don't mind, you might help the sergeant with the phone numbers."

"I'll be glad to, Vance," Garden returned. "Anything special in mind?"

Vance turned toward the door.

"Yes, Oh, yes. Quite. I'm hopin' to clear this matter up later on. Meanwhile I'm running a long Cheerio." And he went out, closing the door.

As we walked down the outer hall to the elevator, Vance said to Markham somewhat sadly: "I hope my plan works out. I don't particularly like it. But I don't like injustice, either. . . ."

We had been home but a very short time when Sergeant Heath telephoned as he had promised. Vance went into the anteroom to answer the call and closed the door after him. A few minutes later he rejoined us and, ringing for Currie, ordered his hat and stick.

"I'm running away for a while, old dear," he said to Markham. "In fact, I'm joining the doughy sergeant at the homicide bureau. But I sha'n't be very long. In the meantime, I've ordered lunch for us here."

"For Heaven's sake, Vance, what are you planning?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## Queen Elizabeth's Gowns

Queen Elizabeth is said to have left more than three thousand habits in her wardrobe when she died, including gowns, petticoats, kirtles, doublets, and mantles, some embroidered with jewels and others made of velvet and damask. A high functionary who was received by the queen in audience described her dress as follows: "The queen had two great pearls in her ears with very big drops. She wore red false hair and a small crown. Her neck was uncovered and she had a huge necklace of exceeding fine jewels. Her gown was white silk all bordered with white pearls as big as beans. She wore a mantle of bluish silk shot with silver threads and a very long train." She is described as "vain and effeminate, though brusque and masculine."

# HOW ARE YOU TODAY?

DR. JAMES W. BARTON Talks About

### Chronic Arthritis.

WHEN we see so many individuals crippled with rheumatism we may wonder what chance they have of living for any length of time. Unable to use certain joints, suffering more or less pain at times or all the time, the effect upon their appetite, digestion, bowel activity, and outlook on life is bound to affect their health and length of life.



Dr. Barton

Dr. H. A. Nissen, Boston, in the Maine Medical Journal attempts to standardize, at least roughly, the length of time the rheumatic or arthritic patient is likely to live. The clinical course of 500 arthritic patients was charted and analyzed. The cases where the arthritic or rheumatic symptoms had existed for less than five years were not included in this study. The duration of the rheumatic symptoms ranged from five to twenty years.

In any group of so-called arthritic patients 68 per cent (about 7 in 10) can be assured of improvement. The remaining 32 per cent or 3 in 10 are the ones which Dr. Nissen states physicians should carefully study, keeping a careful record so as to be able to measure or compare the changes in the course of the arthritis.

**Knowledge Worth the Effort.**

This may mean patience and effort but the knowledge gained will be worth the effort expended if it proves to show the degree of arthritic disturbance, and what the future holds out in the way of encouragement for the patient.

It is only by this long patient effort that the physician can really know whether his care of the case has been good, bad or indifferent.

There is no question but the above advice is sound because when an ailment is an old or chronic one such as arthritis, the patient, and the physician also, are apt to try various treatments for short periods of time in an endeavor to get or give quick relief.

The treatment of rheumatism or arthritis today consists of the removal of any infection (in teeth, tonsils, sinuses, gall bladder, intestine), diet—starch foods are cut down; application of heat in some form; followed later by massage; the moving or manipulation of the joints; and the use of drugs known as the salicylates.

Thus with 7 out of 10 arthritic patients assured of improvement in their condition, and the other 3 in 10 receiving careful supervision and treatment, the outlook for length of time and enjoyment of life for arthritics is encouraging.

### The Building-Up Foods.

In the early days of the automobile many of the women of the country and the villages cast covetous eyes on the sleek, well fed, well rounded women of the city who went by in the open automobiles of those days. "If those women had as much work and worry as I have they would not look so smooth, sleek and placid."

And today, we find that our women of the country and village, and even of the city itself are not at all anxious to look sleek, well fed and plump. In fact as two of every five of our adult population are believed to be overweight, it would seem that perhaps a little more work and worry would prevent the increase in weight.

Naturally then for one who wishes to increase weight the main thought is rest, light exercise to induce appetite and prevent constipation, and a little extra food, rich in food value. "Rest, relaxation and fresh air are important parts of the day's schedule if the diet is to be successful in increasing weight."

However, despite the fact that a tendency to thinness or leanness seems to run in some families, many individuals are underweight because of some infected teeth or tonsils, chronic sinus infection or tuberculosis—that is, some underlying slow or low infection. Thus before going on a diet rich in calories (high caloric), a diligent search for the cause of the underweight should be made by a physician and dentist. If no infection can be found, then a diet 25 to 50 per cent richer than at present should be taken because underweight means a reduction of the reserves—energy reserves—of the body. An underweight cannot fight an illness or infection as well as if he were of normal weight, nor is he capable of doing as much physical or mental work.

The idea of a rich or high caloric diet is to make sure that the food contains all the materials needed for the various tissues of the body, and to this is added a further amount of food to build extra tissue or to replace tissue that has been lost.

As mentioned before, starch and fat foods are the great energy givers, and proteins—meats, eggs, fish, cereals—are the great builders or rebuilders.

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# Drainage of Farm Roads Is Benefit

## Repairing Should Be Done Before Usual Work Has to Be Started.

By E. R. Gross, Professor of Agricultural Engineering, New Jersey State College.—WNU Service.

Timely repair is as necessary to farm roads as it is to farm equipment. And the best time to make repairs is before plowing and seed-sowing become the farmer's principal concern.

Delay in making repairs to farm roads can be costly to farmers, as roads which are in bad condition hinder transportation and may be the cause of missing the opportunities of a favorable market.

Since water does the greatest amount of damage to roads, drainage should be the first consideration in their upkeep. Diverting the water to roadside ditches prevents erosion but these ditches will not eliminate sub-surface water which prevents a firm road bed. In low or level places, lines of tile two to two and one-half feet below the surface should be run parallel to the road. Having provided adequate drainage, the grade may be restored or even improved. The firm dry road bed thus established will resist much heavier traffic without breaking down.

Dragging will keep sand, silt or clay roads in good condition. Repeated at frequent intervals, dragging tends to harden the top layers, especially in clay soils. Thus a good, firm road may be maintained by proper drainage, grading and adequate dragging. If a better type of road is desired, surfacing may be considered. Gravel, stone, a sand asphalt blanket or other surfacing materials may be used to advantage and for profit.

## When You Want to Alkalize Stomach Fast

### One Cold Spot

The coldest spot on the earth is not the North pole, nor even the South pole, which is colder still. The temperature drops lower in parts of Siberia and other regions of the world than it does at either pole.

At Verkhoyansk, Siberia, a temperature of 90 degrees below zero has been recorded, while the lowest temperatures at the North pole are believed to be about 65 below zero. Temperatures of 73 and 77 below zero have been recorded on the Antarctic ice barrier but no winter figures are available for the high plateau around the South pole.

Keep your body free of accumulated waste, take Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets, 60 Pellets 30 cents. Adv.

### Essence of Genius

Genius does its best. The essence of genius is not to shirk.

## When You Want to Alkalize Stomach Fast



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### Some Justification

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## THE CHEERFUL CHERUB

I hate to lie awake at night. Of darkness I am not afraid. But always I remember then. The many awful breaks I've made.