

# The Mystery of the Silver Dagger

By Randall Parrish  
Author of "The Strange Case of Cavendish"

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## ACTION! ACTION!

Adventure—romance—mystery—battle, murder and sudden death! Well, rather. And action, action, action—on every page. That's Randall Parrish's new story, "The Mystery of the Silver Dagger."

Suppose you were an American diplomat and you fell in love at first sight with a wonderful, mysterious girl who was apparently deep in an international revolutionary conspiracy and you had the identity of a famous crook thrust upon you and you found one of the chief conspirators dead from a stab with the mysterious girl's silver dagger hatpin! And suppose you set to work to break up the conspiracy and solve the murder and win the girl—wouldn't you be busy? Well, that's this hero and this hero's job.

As to Randall Parrish, all novel-readers know him and his stories. And this is one of his best.

## CHAPTER I.

### The Message in the Box.

Anticipating the possibility of my train arriving late, I had named the hour of my meeting with Cummings as three o'clock, and, in consequence of our reaching the city exactly on time, was compelled to loiter idly about the hotel for an hour. However, in passing through the corridor my attention was attracted by a unique curiosity shop occupying a small side room, and, merely to pass the time pleasantly, I entered and began examining the strange collection of wares on display.

There were several articles I lingered over, tempted to purchase, but drifted on, rather undecided, until my eyes perceived a very quaint lacquered jewel box, of a class of workmanship quite unusual. The proprietor, perceiving my interest, joined me.

"The jewel box attracts you," he said pleasantly, opening the case and bringing it forth. "You have love for such things?"

"A deep interest at least," I admitted, taking the article from his hand, "a collector in an amateur way. What is the workmanship—surely not Japanese?"

"No," smilingly. "Although positively I cannot answer as to its origin. The inscription, which can only be read with a microscope—he traced with his finger—"is ancient Arabic, but no wild Arab ever did the lacquer."

"Yet so strange a curio must have a history, an imaginary one, at least. What is the story?"

"Positively none," he admitted regretfully. "The fact is, this article was found by a chambermaid in one of the hotel rooms, and turned in to the manager. He made every effort to trace the guests, only to learn that they, two men, by the way, had registered falsely. He even advertised, but with no response, and finally, after thirty days, was persuaded to accept my offer for the article."

"You have put a price on this?" "Yes, ridiculously low, no doubt, yet bringing me a good profit."

He named a price, and, still with the box in my hands, I yielded to the temptation, and bought it. The article was sufficiently small to find lodgment in an overcoat pocket, and, as Cummings appeared a little later, was soon forgotten in the earnestness of our conversation. We later had dinner together, and attended the theater in company, my mind so occupied with other matters that I scarcely once thought of the strange purchase I had made, which remained securely hidden. It was only after returning to my own room, then nearing midnight, that it was again recalled to memory.

Only an idle curiosity and a feeling of sleeplessness induced me to draw the article forth, and remove its wrappings, but the sight served immediately to increase my interest. It was certainly a wonderful find, artistically beautiful, and most unusual in design. There was a mystery that must have exercised a strange spell over my imagination, for I dreamed of the long-dead workman who fashioned it, forgetful of the passing night hours. A clock somewhere in the neighborhood struck, and I counted twelve, arousing myself. Perhaps I was already half sleeping, for as I turned to rise my sleeve struck the box at the edge of the table, and before I could prevent the fall, it lay upon the floor at my feet.

As I stooped hastily to recover the overturned box, I was astounded to discover the bottom slipped partially aside, as though some secret spring had been touched, revealing so narrow a receptacle that the ordinary eye would never suspect the possibility of its existence. Not only was there a false bottom, but the opening revealed a closely folded paper. I grasped this quickly, a thrill running through me. What ancient and long-buried message was about to be unfolded?

But no! This was plainly modern—a clean, white sheet, no folded parchment of old, but some mystery of yesterday. There was writing there, in Spanish, so faintly traced I could barely decipher the words, yet clearly revealed as of this day and generation. I know Spanish fairly well, having had a year in Mexico City, yet it required some time before I could puzzle out the message on this sheet. The paper had been torn, seemingly sundered from a much longer letter, and preserved merely because of the specific address and instructions it contained. Beyond doubt all else had been destroyed. What remained may have been sufficient guidance to the party who had the benefit of what went before in the original epistle, but was obscure to anyone else. Yet it was modern, something relating to this very time, a menace; something to be grasped and understood. This conviction absolutely gripped me. I stared at the rather sinister words, blindly groping at what lay hidden behind them, instinctively scenting a conspiracy of evil which I could not determine. All unintentional I had stumbled into a clew which might lead to startling results, yet it seemingly gave me no hint of who was involved, or of its real nature. I put the words together, weighing each one with care as to its exact meaning, and read them over with increased bewilderment. The torn fragment began and ended abruptly; I could only guess at its meaning, yet the impression left upon my mind was both sinister and menacing. I wanted to know more.

108 called Saturday from Stockholm. Will deposit letter of credit with Krantz to your order. Amount ample all needs. See to this at once, and advise 775 Gans, so as to be no delay. Two raps, three—Cervantes. Waldron favors action this month; suggest Wagonia. Can you be ready? Use South A code.

That this letter was authentic I had no doubt, nor was its meaning altogether obscure in the light of certain events. Several allusions were familiar to me and these were what caused my earlier suspicions to crystallize into probability. It bore all the earmarks of a plot, a revolutionary plot, and one



Questioned Him Relative to the Mysterious Box.

not yet brought to consummation. To be sure the note was undated, and the box had been left at the hotel thirty days before. Yet the Wagonia was certainly the name of a ship and to my memory suggested Central American trade. This did not necessarily imply that the conspirators had abandoned their purpose. More likely they were not quite ready in time to operate on the sailing date of that particular ship. Some delay had occurred, and, possibly, even now prompt action might overturn all their plans. I undressed and went to bed, but not to sleep, for the darkness brought new thoughts and suggestions for the morrow.

I was still in government employ, although unassigned, and felt this discovery to be a direct call upon my service. While my first inclination should naturally have been to turn the whole matter over to the proper bureau for investigation, two facts led me in another direction—I was sufficiently young to seek adventure, and I desired to verify my suspicions before creating any false alarm.

As I rested there, sleepless, staring up at the black ceiling, the words of the strange fragment of letter remained vividly before me. Little by little I dug at the truth, coming finally to this conclusion: "108" was, no doubt, the recognized number of some agent who had been dispatched to America on a special errand to the conspirators in this country. He had sailed Saturday, a month ago, or more, and must have long since arrived at some port, bringing with him instructions not to be entrusted to the mail, and sufficient money, in form of letter of credit, with which to finance whatever nefarious scheme of revolution might be contemplated. This money

was to be paid out to the authorized party through a man named Krantz. Who was Krantz? There was a well-known banking firm, Kulb, Krantz & Co., in Wall Street, and it was quite probable these might prove the ones involved, although to my knowledge they had no outwardly connected connections of this nature. "Gans" was evidently a street, although I could recall none bearing so peculiar appellation, while the password was in itself proof almost positive as to the South or Central American sympathies of the conspirators.

These facts were fairly clear as I thus weaved them together, but they were rendered more damning by the other name mentioned—Waldron. If this was Ivan Waldron, I had good reason to know the fellow, and to connect his activities with any scheme destined to embarrass the government. He was a professional agitator of the most pronounced type, a socialist radical, who in the past had openly advocated opposition to all law and order. Moreover, the fellow had a large and desperate following, to whom he was a high priest. He was reported to be a Russian by birth, but spoke English without an accent, and I felt no doubt but what a sufficient amount of money would engage his interest in any desperate cause. The desire to "get him" added zest to my interest in the affair. If he was actually at the head of these fellows, these plotters against the neutrality of the United States, the catch would be worth while.

As soon as possible next morning I sought out Burke, the manager of the hotel, with whom I had a speaking acquaintance, and, without confiding the extent of my discovery, questioned him relative to the mysterious box, and the guests who left it behind. Two men, he said, both well dressed, but with nothing particularly to distinguish them, had registered together late in the afternoon of Friday, September 27, and on request had been assigned to one room with twin beds and a bath. The larger man, who had inscribed himself as "P. S. Horner, Detroit," alone had a bag; his companion, known to the hotel as "Gustave Alva, Toledo, Ohio," being without baggage. The bill was paid the next morning by Horner, and the two departed together. It was an hour later when the chambermaid on that floor reported finding the box in the room vacated. After holding it for a day or two in expectation that it might be called for, no such inquiries being made, the hotel endeavored to trace the men, but to no avail. The fellows had either falsely registered, or were entirely unknown where they claimed residence. This first was the most probable condition. After thirty days, and having exhausted all reasonable efforts to find the rightful owner, the hotel felt legally justified in selling the trinket. That was all Burke knew of the matter, and his interest in it was not keen.

I am inclined to think now that I went at the problem without much system, and that any success achieved was through pure accident. During the forenoon I dropped in upon Clement Breckenridge, cashier of the Dqver's National bank. We had been classmates at college, and I generally called on him when in the city. This time I led the conversation to Kulb, Krantz & Co., on the pretense that I had received mail from them relative to some recommended investment. Clement knew Krantz well and favorably, and my probing elicited the information that the man was Austrian by birth, but a naturalized citizen, rather deeply interested in political matters. If his sympathies were at all revolutionary he had carefully refrained from any such open expression. The firm had made a specialty of handling South American business, and had intimate financial connections in both Rio and Buenos Aires. The company ranked high in financial circles.

"The present war must have cost them a rather heavy loss," I hazarded. "However, this is nothing to me. By the way, Clement, do you chance to know of a Gans street in this town?" "Gans? That is a new one on me. Try the city directory—there on the edge of the desk."

The name was not to be found, nor any other approaching it in sound or spelling, and I finally drifted out onto the street, really no wiser than when I first entered. I made one more effort, however, telephoning to a detective sergeant whom I knew well, as to the present whereabouts of Ivan Waldron. The last heard of Waldron, he was in West Virginia, speaking to striking miners; that was less than a week ago; he had not been seen in the city since.

Enter the heroine.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

And There You Have It. Elizabeth, when asked the ages of her two brothers, answered, "I am bigger than the littlest one and littler than the biggest one."

## ONE-PIECE DRESS

IN RED AND WHITE GINGHAM

Blue Serge Outfit Has Lost None of Its Popularity.

Favorite Frock Is Simpler This Season—Many of Them Have Little or No Trimming.

The blue serge one-piece dress has lost nothing of its general popularity. It is, perhaps, simpler this year, for very many of them have little or no trimming. There is the blue serge coat dress which is a stunning thing when it is well done. One of them was made with a wrapping sort of collar trimmed only with two wide folds of the serge itself. There were three-quarter length sleeves with wide cuffs formed from the same grouping of folds. And the dress then opened at the left side where a diagonal line formed the opening, and the whole thing was held in place by a narrow tied belt of the serge. You can see that there was not a single bit of relief in the shape of trimming or colored facing, but the gown was smart and its chic was helped along by the addition of an entirely dark blue hat made of a soft draped French fallie.

There is a tendency to trim many of the serge dresses with bands of red, either of braid or of a soft duvety that looks like flannel or with facings of silk applied in some way. This is a touch that is always good with blue serge, and it livens up a dark gown without making it in any way conspicuous.

Most of the new coat suits are made to close in front with link buttons, so that they have the effect of just meeting instead of buttoning over, as was



With rufflings of white organdie, this is a delightfully cool and crisp outfit. It is youthful, too.

ended at a three-quarter line and others that, like the French ones, were quite short. These shorter ones have a tendency to chop in two the shorter figures, but they are sweet looking and no woman with the possibility of obtaining one will want to be without it.

## FASHIONS IN BRIEF

With serge skirts are worn hip-length jackets of quilted India silk.

A red and white checked gingham frock, with bindings and pipings of the red, is a distinctive style.

A touch of black cleverly used is one of the best things to give character to gray. It must, however, be cleverly used.

Hemstitching is a popular trimming for cotton and linen frocks, and a pretty conceit is the use of several contrasting shades of threads.

For the little girl of three to five or six years, colored dotted swiss seems the most approved fabric for dress-up frocks. Sometimes a trimming of plain color or white organdie finishes the frock.

Voile is the most popular fabric selection for the sheer, lingerie blouse, and cotton fabrics have slumped so in price that very fine weaves can be had at reasonable figures. Often no trimming is used except hand-drawn work, hemstitching and perhaps groups of little French knots.

## LONGER IN BACK THAN FRONT

Skirts in New Style Afforded Interesting Note in the Recent Paris Openings.

Recent openings by Parisian modistes revealed the quirks in new styles and reversions to old styles.

Skirts that were much longer in back than in front struck a new fashion note. Panels in uneven lengths gave this same varying line at the hem.

Many of the gowns had all the trimming on the front, and very little in back. Plain draperies in back contrasted oddly with flower trimmed overdresses in front. The new trimmings are wood embroidery—narrow strips of wood, painted red, and strung in borders to trim a blue serge gown—and black ivy garlands used on a beige afternoon dress.

Few evening gowns were shown without picture hats.

## DECORATIONS FOR THE HAIR

Gold Ribbon and Braid, Jet Ornaments Fastened to Velvet, Bronze Articles Afford Good Effect.

Color contrast is a good rule for making the headdress becoming. Black hair is set off with gold ribbon or braid, while auburn locks are stunning with jet ornaments fastened to a velvet bandeau. Bronze ornaments are likewise stunning for the titan-toned coiffure. Bronze paint will quickly coat all sorts of appropriate ornaments to make a headdress, such as flowers, leaves, grasses, jewelry and feathers. A silver wreath of small flowers or just plain leaves is lovely on black hair. Golden hair is beautiful with pale-green turquoise or Dresden effects in ribbon ornaments. Turquoise velvet caught with sparkling rhinestone slides is another suggestion for hair ornamentation.

## WORD TO THE NEEDLEWOMEN

Applique Work Enhances Charm of Blouse and Frock, Especially for the Children.

Most dainty is the organdie blouse or frock with applique of wild roses. An especially attractive blouse of this description shows a spray of flowers in wild rose design at the point of the yoke in front. The applique is in pale yellow on a white background. Around the edge the buttonhole stitch is used, with French knots in the center. The sprays of leaves are in white mercerized cotton.

For children's frocks nothing gives a prettier touch than patchwork giv-

baskets, insects and sailboats. The last named design is especially pleasing to the little boys. It is used on flaring pockets of trousers and on blouse pockets.

## MOORISH SWAGGER IN PARIS

Oriental Note is Creating Interest in France; Artificial Flowers Play Part in Picture.

If the fashionable women of Paris adopt the Moorish style of dress, which is dominant in the new spring vogues now being shown by the dressmakers in Paris, they will be seen hiding their hair under turbans and learning to walk with a swinging motion of the hips, says the Daily Mail.

The oriental note shows itself not only in the brightly colored turbans and in scarfs and sashes, but also in the use of sequins as ornaments for evening gowns. Artificial flowers of gaudy color and great size are favorite trappings. A single bloom worn on the left hip, or a loose garland hung round the body some inches below the waistline, enhances the oriental style.

## Prevent Runners.

Silk stockings that are the least bit too short should have the hem ripped out at once. It will not ravel. But if worn too short, the garter will pull the stockings tight and it is just as apt to begin to drop stitch at the heel or about the ankle as at the garter top. A row of stitching below where the garter is fastened will keep the hose from laddering from the top downward.

## Why That Bad Back?

Is backache keeping you miserable? Are you "all played out," without strength or vigor for your work? Then find what is causing the trouble and correct it. Likely, it's your kidneys! You have probably been working too hard and neglecting rest and exercise. Your kidneys have slowed up and poisons have accumulated. That, then, is the cause of the backache, headaches, dizziness and bladder irregularities. Use Doan's Kidney Pills. Doan's have helped thousands and should help you. Ask your neighbor!

## A Virginia Case

"My back aches like a hammer," writes Mrs. F. M. Entwistle, 1207 Gibson St., Alexandria, Va., 48278: "There was a sore and lame feeling and a heavy, bearing-down ache in my back all the time. My head felt as though someone were pounding it and I became very nervous. I had dizzy spells, too. The way my kidneys acted bothered me a lot. By the time I had finished the second box of Doan's Kidney Pills I was entirely cured."

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In Montgomery County there is a real chance for the white farmer. For booklets, Farm Sec. 215 Bell Bldg., Montgomery, Ala.

## KREMOLA

MAKES THE SKIN BEAUTIFUL. Does wonders for a red and white complexion. 297 1/2 Michigan Avenue, Chicago.

Saw Both Sides. Little Roy doesn't care for dancing and at the party the other night he held aloof as much as possible. His sister said, "Roy, don't you realize that every time you don't dance there is some little girl not having a good time?" "Yes," said Roy, "and don't you realize that every time I do dance there is a little boy who isn't having a good time?"

## Shave With Cuticura Soap

And double your razor efficiency as well as promote skin purity, skin comfort and skin health. No mug, no slimy soap, no germs, no waste, no irritation even when shaved twice daily. One soap for all uses—shaving, bathing and shampooing.—Adv.

## Bound to Be Saved.

Hazel—Aren't you afraid of going in beyond your depth? Helen—No; all the men here think I'm an heiress.—Portland Express.

Coconut farmers in Borneo gather most of their crop with the aid of trained monkeys.

A Jewish girl's club has been organized in Shanghai, China.

Do you know you can roll 50 good cigarettes for 10cts from one bag of



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