

The Mystery of the Silver Dagger

By Randall Parrish

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CHAPTER XI—Continued.
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I stole as silently as possible across to the door. It was securely locked, of course, and could be forced open, if at all, only by creating considerable alarm. I stood, staring helplessly about, feeling the impossibility of escape. I could only wait for my failers to appear, impotent to aid myself in any way—or her. After all, that last thought was the most impelling. That they suspected Marie Gessler of being implicated in both murder and robbery was clearly evident; indeed, they not only suspected, but were convinced that she had done the deed. I was secretly obliged to admit that they had some reason to so believe; that they even possessed proof which would probably convict her in court of the crime. This gave them a terrible advantage over the girl, once they had her bodily in their possession. Guilty or not guilty, she could not establish her innocence; under torture and threat, such as they would doubtless use in their money lust, there was no knowing what might happen. Alone, helpless in the grasp of these unscrupulous crooks, her fate might be death, disgrace. Certainly it would be foul insult, and, if she failed to yield, the desire for revenge might even drive those cowards to a secret denunciation of her to the police. This, however, would be their last resort; they would exhaust all other efforts first. And no one else knew of her danger; no one else was in position to aid her; she must face this gang absolutely alone unless I could effect an escape. It was not merely my own life at stake; hers was also in the balance.

And the time in which to act was short. If I escaped at all, it must be accomplished before my jailers returned, before they dreamed that I had aroused from unconsciousness, or had strength enough to make the attempt. Yet what possible way suggested itself? I felt in my pockets; they were utterly empty, except for a single overlooked bill. There was no means of egress other than the window and that seemed hopeless. Yet in desperation I crossed over once more, and again looked out. Could I—dare I—attempt to cling to that slight ledge in my stocking feet, even for the one or two steps necessary to reach the next window? The very conception of such a feat made my head reel giddily and my stomach rise in protest. Besides, even if I made it by some miracle, what if that other window should be closed and locked? How could I ever move backward to regain safety?

Yet wait: there was a way, dangerous enough to be sure, yet possible if I possessed the necessary nerve. There were opened blinds at each window; they would help some as grasping spots for the hands. The one within reach appeared solid enough, firmly anchored to the casement, and secured to the brick wall by means of an iron hook. Between the two the space to be traversed was not wide; a single stride on the ground beneath would bridge the distance. If I had some thing to cling to above—anything that would keep me upright—I might hold my footing on the narrow ledge and make the passage slowly. It was a daring, deadly venture, but possible.

But what could I hope to utilize as a support? The bare room offered but a single suggestion—the dirty coverlet which had been thrown over me. Torn apart from corner to corner, and twisted into the form of a rope, it ought to safely sustain my entire weight in case a foot slipped. I started to tear with my teeth, and thus succeeded in ripping the thing from end to end. It was scarcely long enough for the purpose, which compelled me to make the noose correspondingly small. However, with this improvised lasso gripped in my right hand, I took position astride the sill of the window, in an endeavor to project the loosened end over some protuberance of the blind beyond. By holding tight to the frame with my left hand, the right was left free, and I was enabled to lean out far enough to obtain a clear toss. There was little the noose could catch on, and continued failure left me listless and discouraged. I lost hope, yet kept at it, and finally, to my surprise, the ring of the cloth settled over an iron projection of the hinge, and clung there, extending straight across from window to window. I hardly dared breathe as I drew the thing taut and tested the firmness with which it was held at the other end. The noose closed down tightly about the iron staple, and resisted every effort at release. To all seeming it was as safely anchored as though I had placed it there by hand. Somehow the very knowledge that this had been accomplished, that the way was open, brought with it a renewal of the feeling of horror with which I had first contemplated the possibility of such an accomplishment. Would I ever dare the attempt? My head swam as I gazed downward, and then across, and I shrank back absolutely terrified at the very thought.

Yet my nerve returned, and I found myself cool and determined. It was

no pleasant job, to be sure, and I was compelled to steel myself to the attempt, yet I no longer held back paralyzed by fear. I easily found a secure fastening for the strip of bed-spread at my own window, and then, satisfied that it was taut and securely held at both ends, lowered my body cautiously over the sill, until my stocking feet nervously gripped the narrow stone of the coping. I dare not look down or permit my mind to dwell for an instant on what was below. Slowly I straightened up, until my entire weight was upheld by this precarious foot-hold. To advance step by step was impossible; all I could hope to accomplish in locomotion was to stealthily advance one foot a few inches, sliding it along the stone, ever retaining contact, and then, as carefully drawing the other after until they met, toe and heel. It was the slow progress of a snail, yet the slightest effort at hurrying would mean a certain fall.

This was not unduly perilous, however, so long as I retained firm hold on the sill, or even could grip my fingers over the lower frame of the open blind, as I was enabled thus to partially sustain my weight, and, even if a foot slipped, the feel of the solid wood yielded confidence. But finally my hand reached out and grasped only the cloth cord, twisted into some semblance of a rope, and, as it gave sickeningly to the pressure, the old fear swept over me in a torrent of agony. I could never make it—never! I would go swirling, crashing down to that death below. It was but a step, to be sure; a step and I could reach the firmness of the other blind; but, oh, the step—the speechless horror of it! Yet there was no going backward: I tried this, only to realize at once its impossibility, and the perspiration burst out from every pore, as the full horror of my situation suddenly flashed over me. I must go on, trusting to that thin, unstable cord, balancing myself above the gulf. There was no other way, no retreat, no means of escape. I do not know now how the act was accomplished; it is hardly a



The Sleeper Was Marie Gessler!

memory, except as some wild delirium of sleep haunts one when they awake. Inch by inch I crept, hand encroaching on hand, foot pressing against foot, every slightest movement an inexpressible agony—then I gripped the support of wood once more, and clung to it as with the grasp of death.

I clung there until my mind came back, until I felt the return of strength to my body, and I could look down through the moonlight without reeling dizzily. The blind was strong, firmly braced, and I felt safe in its protection. But what about the window beyond? Suppose it should be locked? or the room into which I opened, occupied? I could not continue to cling there in uncertainty; I must learn the truth—assure myself that I had not passed through all this tense agony in vain.

I moved slowly, barely an inch at a time, each advancing foot feeling for support, but more confident now because of the grasp of my fingers on the upper wood. The window was closed, but dark and grimy looking, as though the room within had been long unoccupied. Its very appearance gave me courage. I balanced myself on the precarious footing of the stone, clinging tenaciously with my left hand to the iron hinge of the blind, while my right endeavored to raise the sash. At first I believed the window firmly fastened down—the suspicion leaving me numb with despair. But reckless tugging loosened its hold, and enabled me to shove up the sash little by little, until finally the opening became sufficient for me to squeeze through. I felt as though I had returned from the dead, the nervous reaction so great that I lay for a moment on the floor where I had fallen, unable to move. I knew I was alone, the space untenanted, the walls as bare as in that other room from which

I had fled. I knew this, and in my exhaustion cared to know no more. Then I staggered to my knees, and, with opened eyes stared curiously about, gathering my wits together. There was nothing to see but the four walls. I tried the door, and it opened silently, permitting me to glance out into a narrow dark hallway, unperceived. I could dimly discern the top of a flight of stairs leading down to the story below. I slipped out, and closed the door softly behind me, being plunged instantly into funereal blackness.

I groped a way forward toward the stairs, guided by a hand against the wall, until the touch of the upper rail assured me of my position. A narrow strip of carpeting—rag I took it to be from the feeling—extended down the center of the stairs, sufficient to muffle any footsteps, and I paused a moment listening for the slightest noise amid the darkness beneath. All remained still and mysterious; so that I drew forth my shoes from a coat pocket and slipped them on.

Twice the boards creaked ominously under my tread, sounding terrific in that silence, and causing me to hang in suspense over the banister rail, holding my breath in fear of discovery. At last I attained the wider space at the bottom, and sought blindly to explore my surroundings. But for the carpet underfoot, and a small sofa encountered in a recess, I would have believed myself in a deserted house. I knew I was on the third floor, yet there was no curve in the banisters, showing a way to the next flight of stairs, nor could I locate them by any effort. As the result of blindly groping about, I lost all sense of direction and must have wandered into a side room through an undraped recess, for I suddenly brought up against a table, littered with papers and books.

Startled by this encounter into a realization that I was lost in a strange house at an unholy hour of the morning, and that the slightest misstep in that darkness might result in an alarm to awaken every sleeper, for a few minutes I did not venture to move in any direction. Yet manifestly I could not remain there indefinitely, and so, blindly choosing a course, I set forth, feeling a way cautiously forward until I first ran into a chair, and then struck one hand against a side wall. I followed this latter as best I could, inspired by the thought that if I continued this course long enough I must attain the opening through which I had entered the room. On the way my hands felt the outlines of a closed door, and, in aimlessly groping about, encountered a key in the lock. It was so inserted as to be extracted at the touch of my fingers and instantly a tiny ray of light shot forth through the vacated hole. It was such a relief in the heart of that darkness as to cause me to quickly bend down and endeavor to view the scene within.

It was evidently a chamber of some size, and well furnished, rather dimly illuminated by a single shaded electric globe, a handsome green rug on the floor, and numerous pictures hung about the walls. I could perceive the outlines of a bed at one side, barely within the range of the vision, and opposite this an ornate dresser, with three mirrors. But what my eyes rested upon with greater interest was a luxurious leather couch beside the further wall on which a woman rested, with some sort of covering draped about her. She lay with face toward the wall, motionless, and to all appearances sound asleep.

To arouse her was the last thing I desired, and I would have slipped the key back into the lock, and stolen silently along in the darkness, had she not suddenly stirred, flinging out one hand as though in fear of some dream, and turned partially, so that her face became clearly visible. The sleeper was Marie Gessler! For a moment I could scarcely credit the discovery; yet there could be no mistake. I remembered too well every characteristic of the girl, to be deceived.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Reasonable Excuse.

Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, the noted food expert, and Dr. Samuel Wilson, retired minister, were discussing old times one day last week.

Both the men are graduates of Hanover college, near the Ohio river, which the minister spent his early years.

"I remember the great floods of '82, '83 and '84" said Dr. Wilson. "During one of those floods we had to retire to the second floor, and then to the third floor."

"We had to cook our food over the grate," he recalled. "In the morning we would let down a bucket on a rope to the milkman, who came in a skiff."

Dr. Wiley smiled.

"That would be some excuse for watering the milk," he said.

A Siam.

He—Witty people make me tired. She—Trying to keep up with them, I suppose.—Boston Transcript.

It must be awfully nice to be so rich that you can afford to grumble about the enormous taxes you pay.

Makes Hose Wear

Proper Care, Expert Says, Will Save Much Expense.

One-Half Size Larger Than Regular Size Is Advised; Wear Only Once Before Washing.

How two pairs of silk hose may be made to last an incredibly long time if the wearer will take the care of them that the average motorist gives his automobile tires, is explained as follows by the silk stocking expert:

When the motorist buys a tire he must necessarily pick out the right size, or it would not fit his rim. It knows, too, that if he gets a size slightly larger, called an "oversize tire," his car will not only ride easier, but the tire will last longer.

The same rule is the first one to follow when silk hose are purchased. If hosiery is bought one-half size larger than one wears in cotton or lisle, the wearing quality is greatly increased.

A little sewing is the next precaution to take. Each individual wears out his stockings in a particular place. Some invariably get a hole in the right large toe, while others suffer with holes in the heel or on the bottom of the sock first. Because of a little 25-cent hole or "run," \$5 worth of silk stockings is laid aside. The idea is, then, to remedy, or prevent, this 25-cent hole before it appears. With ordinary sewing silk weave or darn around and over the area where the hole usually appears. This will reinforce the silk in this place so that the hole cannot get a start.

"Runs," or "Jacob's ladders," can also be prevented in the stocking so that one gets his money's worth out

LIKE "THREE-DECKED" CAPE



Reviving the long riding cloak of Revolutionary days as an early autumn wrap comes this model from Paris. The fine black serge is thrice banded with broad strips of fur, one of them edging a small overcape and the other two simulating similar capes.

STYLES IN WHITE HATS ARE MANY

Trim Sailor With Ribbon Trimming Vice With Blossom Decorated Chapeau That Is Larger.

With the great vogue for all white it is natural this should be popular for felt hats, and they are with us from the trim sailor with ribbon trimming to the blossom-trimmed hat of larger proportions. The dullness and drabness of a plain white felt is more apt to be relieved, however, by a large wax flower, a pond lily, or gardenia, by silk fringe arranged in some novel cascade or cabochon. The flower trimming is strong on all felts, and unusual flower trimming at that, hydrangea, dandelion, nasturtiums, wild oats, lacquered foliage and so on. Some felt hats have felt flowers; one, a very soft black felt, has an odd combination of little green velvet apples, pink silk apple blossoms, and green leaves painted upon the felt itself.

But if one hat in ten is white, eight of the others are gray. The gray vogue that is dying so hard has had a startling convalescence in the gray felt hat. It is to be found in those soft little rolled hats, close fitting and deplorable, that frame the faces of our bobbed-hair sisters, little hats with a saucy bunch of waxed blossoms laid on one side, three saucier lacquered quills thrust through a fold of the felt, or insinuating bunches of coque feathers brushing the wearer's cheek on one or both sides.

Black, brown or dark green, and possibly bright green will be the colors for felts for later wear. The cloche is again a favorite, very broad of brim

BLACK VELVET FALL BONNET



The big hats with stiff brims are rather awkward in a crowd, so the flapping brim has come to take its place. This hat is of black velvet trimmed with two calla lilies. The checked blouse goes very well with the hat.

At the top of the stocking, below the hem, run a sewing machine stitch completely around, and fasten the garters above this stitch. Another precaution against the dreaded run is unusual care in putting on the stocking. It should be rolled down to and including the heel. The toe of the stocking then should be put over the foot, and the rest then worked easily over the heel. This method of putting on the stocking prevents the nail of the toe from accidentally catching a thread.

The expert further contends that the silk stockings should be worn only once before being washed.

The drying of silk stockings is one of the most important steps affecting their longevity. If the stockings are colored they should be placed between two bath towels and allowed to dry slowly. Stockings should never be hung in the sun or in a bright light at the window to dry.—Illustrated World.

FALL FASHION BRIEFS

Plaited flounces are used on sleeves, as side panels and as tunics.

Bands of gingham may trim a smart sport costume of wool jersey.

Perfume balls are worn around the neck on ribbon and bead chains.

Some of the more elaborate types of new linen frocks indulge in many scallops.

Frocks of crepe de chine are worn with long circular capes of the same material.

Japanese sleeves with linings of bright georgette are a feature of advance fall models.

Leghorns are being shown again in a variety of broad and medium brimmed effects as well as poke shapes.

A frock of pale pink organdie, with a yoke back and front formed by loose smocking, is a smart addition to the wardrobe of the tiny miss.

Gray and brown, which you used to believe you could not combine, are being combined now in some of the smartest of dresses for fall street wear.

Long, rather straight lines are to be adhered to, according to present indications, with suit coats—many of them, at least—long enough to almost conceal the skirt, and elaborately fur trimmed.

and rounded of crown. The felt brim is bound with ribbon, and a twist of ribbon with perhaps a small bow encircles the base of the crown. Smart is a Maria Guy shape of black velvet with the under side of the brim lined with cyclamen velvet, a fold of cyclamen velvet twisted about the base of the crown. The new shapes are large rather than small—the broad, slightly drooping brims shading the face thoroughly.

Plum Custard.

Boil some plums in water until tender, then drain and chop them. Put one quart of milk in a double boiler and when lukewarm add three well-beaten eggs, one-half cup of sugar and two level tablespoons of cornstarch moistened with a little cold milk or cream. Stir until it thickens and boils for eight minutes, then remove from the fire. Add one teaspoon each of lemon and vanilla extract and the plums, stir well and serve when cold.

Tapioa Snow.

Soak one cup of tapioa until soft, and then cook until clear. When clear, add the well-beaten yolks of four eggs and sweeten to taste. Cook for three minutes, dissolve two tablespoons of gelatin in one-half cup of boiling water and cool by adding to one cup of cold water. As soon as it begins to set, beat in with the stiffly beaten whites of four eggs. When sufficiently fluffy, beat in the tapioa and the juice of three lemons. Pour into a mold or molds and set away to harden.

The KITCHEN CABINET

Be diligent and faithful, patient and hopeful, one and all of you, and may we all know, at all times that verily the Eternal rules above us, and that nothing finally wrong has happened or can happen.—Thomas Carlyle.

WARM WEATHER DISHES.

Crisp vegetables, cool drinks and all kinds of ices and sherbets, together with the luscious fruits and melons that are so plentiful, will help to make the warm days of late summer more pleasant.

Cucumber Salad.—Slice three cucumbers, three hard-cooked eggs, one cupful of olives, chopped, three-fourths of a cupful of nuts; serve with mayonnaise in tomato cups or on crisp lettuce leaves.

Combination Salad.—Take two cupfuls of tender green peas, cooked until tender, one cupful of finely diced celery, one-half cupful of rolled peanuts, crisp and freshly roasted, one-half cupful of olives finely chopped, a tablespoonful of scraped onion, added to the salad dressing which should be lightly seasoned. Line a salad bowl (after rubbing it well with a cut clove of garlic) with crisp heart leaves of lettuce and heap in the salad. Garnish with three hard-cooked eggs, or add two of the eggs to the salad and use the remaining one for a top garnish.

Ginger Ice Cream.—Take two cupfuls of scalded milk, one teaspoonful of flour, one cupful of sugar, one beaten egg, a dash of salt, one quart of thin cream, one tablespoonful of vanilla, one-half cupful of Canton ginger cut in small pieces, and three tablespoonfuls of the ginger syrup. Scald the flour and the milk, cool and add the other ingredients, then freeze as usual. Plain vanilla ice cream is delicious with a ginger sauce if one is fond of that flavor.

Mint Julep.—Boil one quart of water and two cupfuls of sugar together twenty minutes. Bruise twelve large sprigs of mint, let steep closely covered five minutes in one and one-half cupfuls of boiling water, strain, add the liquid to syrup. Add one cupful of orange juice, one cupful of strawberry juice and three-fourths of a cupful of lemon juice. Pour into a punch bowl, add a block of ice and two pints of charged water. Garnish with sprigs of mint and whole strawberries.

Muskmelon Cocktails.—Use a small potato scoop and arrange the balls in chilled sherbet glasses. Pour over a syrup made of sugar water and orange and lemon juice, or canton ginger syrup, with some of the chopped ginger in the sauce, is especially delicious. Garnish with a sprig of mint. Serve ice cold.

I deal with water and not with wine. Give me my tankard then.—B. Jonson. Men really know not what good water's worth.—Don Juan.

GOOD THINGS TO CHERISH.

The following recipes are worth putting into the family cook book for once tried they will be used again and again.

Italian Tutti-Frutti Ice.—The combination of fruit for this delicious dish may be made to conform to one's taste and the season. Oranges, plums, strawberries, raspberries, small balls of watermelon, apricots and other fruits in season. The pulp and grated rind of the oranges are used. The stones from plums and apricots are removed and the fruit is weighed, allowing an equal weight of sugar. Make layers of the fruit and sugar, having the sugar on top. Let stand over night and in the morning just bring to the boiling point to make sure that the sugar is dissolved. Do not boil, however; cool and when cold freeze as for any ice.

Grape Juice Ice.—Take one pint of sweetened grape juice, one quart of thin cream, one tablespoonful of lemon juice, taste and sweeten if necessary, then freeze. Serve in sherbet cups, top with whipped cream or a spoonful of vanilla ice cream.

Old Southern Cake.—Cream three-fourths of a pound of butter, add one and one-half pounds of sugar. When well mixed add the yolks of six eggs well beaten, then three-fourths pound of pastry flour, about three cupfuls sifted with one-half a grated nutmeg and one teaspoonful of ground cloves, added alternately with one pint of rich milk. Fold in the stiffly beaten whites and one pound of sultana raisins chopped and mixed with flour. Bake in a large pan, about three inches deep, the batter half filling the pan.

Tomato With Macaroni.—Mix two cupfuls of well cooked macaroni or spaghetti with one cupful of white sauce, sprinkle with one-half cupful of grated cheese. Spread this on a deep glass pie plate. Over the top place tomatoes cut in halves, cut side up. Sprinkle with salt and pepper dot with bits of butter, and sprinkle with buttered crumbs. Bake in a hot oven until the tomatoes are soft but unbroken.

Nettie Maxwell