

The Mystery of the Silver Dagger

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

Copyright by Randall Parrish

CHAPTER XIII—Continued.

I stood irresolute, undecided as to my next move. I felt convinced I was at last on the right trail but how could I verify my suspicion? There seemed to be but one sure method. Whoever had actually committed the murder and robbery, I still clung to the theory that Ivan Waldron knew him, and would demand his share as the price of a silent tongue. Nor would he, under present circumstances, be content to wait very long for such a division. He needed the money more than ever to escape from the observation of the police. If Wine had possession of the valise he would certainly be called upon to deliver a portion of its contents very shortly. My best course, then, was to keep an eye open for Waldron; if he came, there would be no doubt as to the exact nature of his errand.

The stairway gave me no advantage; it was open and doubtless frequently used. To be seen loitering there for any length of time would attract attention. I ventured to try the private door, but, as expected, found it securely locked, nor did I dare exert any force, not knowing who might be inside. The office remained quiet, no one either leaving or entering, nor did I observe any shadow on the frosted glass indicative of movement within. Baffled and uncertain, I had barely returned to my point of concealment, when an elevator stopped at this floor level, and three men stepped out into the corridor. Two of them attracted no attention, but the third was in his shirt-sleeves and wore a cap with some insignia upon it. He advanced briskly, and flung open the door leading into what had once been the "Railway Exchange," and motioned the others to enter. As the three vanished, I heard him explain that this was the only vacant suite on this floor, and then another voice said, dissatisfied, that it was altogether too small for their purpose. When they came out the agent closed the door carelessly and pressed the elevator button, saying he would show them something on the second floor above.

Even as they shot up out of sight I was across the corridor with hand on the knob. I feared a springlock, but was pleasantly disappointed, the door opening instantly, permitting me to slip inside. There were two rooms, both small, and littered with the fragments left by the late occupants. What struck me forcibly was that there was no connection between those rooms and the next suite; they were separated by a thick wall. I could hide here securely enough, and by slightly lifting the glass, gain good view of the corridor, but it would be impossible to overhear anything taking place in Wine's office. At that, the position was better for my purpose than the open stairway, and I unfastened the window sash, propping it open a crack so as to afford me a fair view. If Waldron appeared I would endeavor to discover some means of learning the object of his visit. Meanwhile I was safe enough, and able to observe every movement on the floor.

Suddenly, when I least expected it, the door of the investment office opened, and a young woman came out. She had her hat on, and I took note of a pencil stuck into her hair, and felt no doubt she was Wine's stenographer, who had finished her day's work and was departing for home. Then the man was probably still there alone. The girl disappeared down the elevator, and could scarcely have reached the lower floor, when a cage traveling in the opposite direction stopped and discharged a passenger. It was a woman who stepped out, glancing quickly about as though uncertain where to go, and I recognized Marie Gessler.

She started down the corridor, looking for the numbers on the doors, and then, discovering herself wrong, retraced her steps and approached Wine's door. Even then she appeared to doubt her next move, glancing around as though anxious to remain unobserved before venturing farther. Then, opening the door quickly, she disappeared within. In that moment, before the door closed, I caught the sound of a man's voice, startled, uttering a single surprised exclamation.

"You here! What does this mean?" Then a low spoken answer, the words inaudible, and ended by a click of the latch.

That closed door seemed to urge me to learn what was transpiring beyond; I could not fight back the temptation. But would it open? Had it been left unlocked? The only way in which I could ascertain was to try. There was no one to witness my attempt, and, even if some office door suddenly opened, I could quickly find concealment in the nearby stairway. I crept out through a narrow crack, and approached on tiptoe the entrance to Wine's office. No sound reached me from within, and my fingers silently pressed the knob, which turned without resistance—the latch was off. A half inch at a time I opened the door, listening for any

noise behind, my eyes peering through the narrow crack at what was revealed within. They perceived little, merely a small, unoccupied room, evidently an outer office, containing a cheap desk, two chairs and a typewriter stand, the machine covered. Two maps hung upon the walls; in one corner was a glass water-holder, and in the other a diminutive closet, the door ajar. That was all, except that indistinguishable voices were conversing somewhere beyond the partition and well out of view.

Encouraged to believe this I thrust my head far enough forward to make sure. A step to the left would doubtless have revealed Wine, but from where I stood the end of the partition interfered. By slipping to the right it would be quite possible for me to enter without being seen, and three cautious steps would bring me to the security of the closet. From there, with the door into the corridor closed, I might overhear all that passed between the two. I had ventured too far now to retreat, and, without a second of hesitation, I pressed through the narrow opening, and silently closed the door behind me. Confident that I had not been detected, I crouched into the narrow closet, scarcely knowing whether to be ashamed or proud of my success.

I could clearly distinguish the words of conversation. At first these were hardly understandable, seemingly having no connection with any matter with which I felt concerned. The two were evidently discussing money, to be sure, but in terms involving the payment of interest, and the impossibility of extending a loan. I overheard her say, quietly but firmly: "I came to you, Mr. Wine, because of our connection in other matters. I overheard this discussion, and felt you ought to be forewarned."

"I appreciate your kindness," he answered, evidently surprised, "but simply cannot raise the amount today—it is too late."

"It does not have to be raised today, but before the closing of banking hours tomorrow."

"I can have it by then," desperately. "I was sure you could, if I only explained the necessity."

She arose as though her purpose had been accomplished, but apparently the man was uneasy, and desired to know more.

"But I fail to understand your interest; why should you take the trouble to come here and tell me this?" She laughed lightly.

"Why? really it is easily enough understood. We are together, are we not? Now that Captain Alva is dead, it is generally believed you will be selected to lead in this work. Oh, yes it is; I have already been so informed. And in that case it is absolutely necessary that your bank connections be excellent. There are other funds already in this country."

"Other funds! I supposed this last payment was to be all."

"Assuredly not; the cause cannot stop for an instant merely because of this loss. Moreover, that will doubtless be recovered."

"Do you think so? Have the police found any clues?"

"The police! Hardly, but there are others searching, not so easily turned aside. We believe we know already who got the money."

"You—you think you—you know?" he could not keep the tremble out of his voice. "Was—was it one of us?"

"It could scarcely be an outsider, for the secret was guarded well. Only those of that circle knew the money was here even, while not more than two or three were aware of its having been passed over to Alva. I can't say any more at present, Mr. Wine. You knew Captain Alva very well, did you not?"

"Yes; that is, we were good friends. We had much in common."

"Are you a German?"

"By blood—yes, but born in Poland; Captain Alva's mother was also a Pole; this brought us closer together."

"And you have no suspicion of any one who could have known, and been guilty of this murder and robbery?"

"Why should I? Why you ask me that?" excitedly. "There were many there; perhaps all know except me. You not suppose I know he—he die?"

"Oh, no; I merely thought you might have some suspicion, that was all. It was a strange weapon he was killed with."

"A strange weapon! What you mean, a strange weapon? Do they know what it was that killed him?"

"Certainly; it was picked up in the bottom of the auto—a dagger hatpin, such as women wear. See, it was just like this of mine."

She must have plucked the ornament from out her own hat and laid it on the desk, for I heard the faint click of its fall. There was a moment of intense silence, and I could vision the intense horror with which he was staring at the instrument, unable to command words.

"That thing!" he burst forth finally. "Killed with that!"

"No, not that; but one exactly like it."

"Who says so—the police? Gott! It could not kill a man. Why you tell me this—why?"

"Oh, only because I thought you might be interested. However, let's not talk about it any more. You will settle that account before the close of banking hours tomorrow?"

"I? Yes, I will settle."

There was the sound of a foot on the cement floor of the corridor without, and almost at the same instant the electric light, which had been turned on, revealed a man's shadow on the glass of the closed door. He seemed to stand there hesitatingly; then he rapped with his knuckles on the glass.

I flattened myself out against the inner wall of the closet, aware that the two in the second office were coming forward together, Wine giving vent to a startled oath in his excitement. He strode straight to the door, and opened it with a jerk.

"You, hey! What the devil do you want here?"

"A word with you, and d—n quick—"

It was Waldron's voice, but his speech ended abruptly, as his eyes caught sight of the woman. She wasted no time.

"I was just going," she said calmly, ignoring him, but speaking directly to Wine. "I will see you tomorrow then."

She passed between the two, without so much as favoring the Russian with a glance, and he stared after her with open mouth, then stepped back to watch her progress down the corridor. Wine drew him hastily aside, closing the door tightly and shooting the night-latch.

"The d—n girl never locks this door when she goes out," he muttered angrily, wheeling about to face the other. "Now, speak up, will you! what sends you butting in here?"

"Well, first you tell me," thundered Waldron, gripping the other angrily with one hand, "what business that female has with you? By God, Wine, if you are trying to double-cross, you'll find me no easy mark. Answer, you cur—what was she here for?"

"Nothing, only private business."

"You promised to see her tomorrow?"

"Yes, it was to pay a note. Come in here, and I'll explain all. There's nothing to frighten you, Waldron."

The two disappeared into the inner room, Waldron's voice still rumbling, with Wine interjecting a word now and then. I ventured to stand erect again in the confines of the closet, and press my ear to the crack of the inner door. Both men were confident of being alone, and so deeply immersed in their own affair as to speak with little restraint. Waldron, really frightened at this discovery of Miss Gessler, adopted the method of a bully to carry his point, more eager than ever to escape the city.

"Well," he began, thumping the desk with a fist, "now you begin to spill. Don't try to work any game on me. What do you mean by paying a note? You owe her something?"

"No; now listen, and don't get mad, I tell you just how it was," and Wine endeavored to be smooth and plausible, his voice pitched so low I had difficulty in hearing the words. "She said I was to succeed Alva, and be the revolutionary agent; partly she came to tell me this, but some way she learning of my indebtedness, that I have an overdue note at the bank—"

"How the h—l did she know that?"

"I could not tell," apparently surprised himself. "I never asked, but maybe Krantz he told her. When they talked over my being given charge of the fund—yes, that must be the way, for she insisted I must straighten that matter up quick, before other money was given me."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Dreadful would rather sell a pound of cure than an ounce of prevention.

DIGNITY IS THE KEYNOTE OF WINTER'S COSTUME SUITS



THE wandering and wayward airs of fashion, blowing this way and that at the beginning of the season, have set themselves in definite directions and now we are able to determine which way the wind blows. In suits it is toward long coats and somewhat lengthened skirts; coats that are made interesting by a little variety in styles and much variety in trimmings, and skirts that, with few exceptions, remain plain.

The box coat, with many variations in collars, sleeves, length and trimming, appeals to great numbers of women; as it is developed this season severity is unknown to it. It has more than one rival, the most important of them being coats that decide upon a little definition of the waistline or a ripple in the skirt portion at the sides and back and those in the long redingote style. In a season of dignified suits the last stands at the head of this class.

In the handsome suit pictured the figure is vaguely outlined and the coat ripples at the back below the waistline. It is uneven in length and split up at each side. Fur bands form the cuffs and emphasize the flare and ripple in the back, and fur provides a collar over the long revers. Embroidery in a striking pattern assumes the responsibility of finishing the trim front.

Since fashion has decreed longer skirts, without saying just how much longer they shall be, the length of this model is worth noting. It is long enough, longer than the average by an inch or so, but in keeping with the style, which is intended for matrons.

HERALDING HALLOWEEN WITH WEIRD DECORATIONS



THE jolly festival of Halloween is in sight and imaginative people may turn loose their fancies and let them frolic among spooks and fairies. Young people and children enjoy this pranks festival more than any other, except Christmas.

In the shops that carry crepe paper and colored papers of other kinds, there are all sorts of funny and gruesome suggestions in the matter of dressing up the house and the table for a Halloween party. They present what their agents have found in the realm where witches, black cats, sprites, ghosts and strange creatures frolic under the autumn moon in the fields where the big yellow pumpkins lie. Having set down their findings in black and yellow and white on paper, they leave it to merry-makers to begin where they leave off and fashion such things as are shown above.

Only two light shades or candle shades are pictured, both of them a combination of yellow and black paper with a few touches of black and white water-color paint. One of the shades is a cat's face of orange paper with black ears. The paper is pasted against a cardboard foundation, two faces joined by strips at the sides and supported by ordinary candle-shade holders or with wire. In the other shade, Jack-o'-Lantern sports a long beard of black crepe paper and has black horns.

A yellow windmill of cardboard surrounded by a fence of heavy black paper stands on a circular cardboard

Julia Bottomley

COPYRIGHT BY WESTERN NEWSPAPER UNION

Autumn Colors and Fabrics.

Autumn will see unabated the popularity of red and brown and will have in addition brilliant canary yellow. In fabrics there are many homespuns and thick tweed suitings for autumn and winter use. Some of the homespuns are made up in the sleeveless models.

The Kitchen Cabinet

Copyright, 1921, Western Newspaper Union.

He that hath never warded with misery.
Nor ever tugged with danger or distress.
Hath no occasion nor no need to try
The strength and forces of his worthiness.

EVERYDAY GOOD THINGS.

A most delightful dish may be served with aspic as a foundation. The following recipe is a reliable one:



Aspic Jelly.—Soak one package of gelatin in one cupful of water for two hours. At the end of that time take one quart of rich consommé or other soup stock, add two teaspoonfuls of lemon juice, one teaspoonful of salt, and two tablespoonfuls of tarragon vinegar. Bring to the boiling point, then add the soaked gelatin. Remove from the heat and stir for five minutes until well mixed and the gelatin is thoroughly dissolved. Strain through a jelly bag and set away to mold.

Cream of Celery Soup.—Wash three bunches of celery and cut into small pieces. Cover with boiling water and cook until soft. Strain through a colander. Put a quart of milk, one teaspoonful of chopped onion in a double boiler and cook until scalded. Rub one tablespoonful of butter with the same amount of flour and stir into the boiling soup, stirring constantly until it thickens. Add salt and pepper to season and the sifted celery. Serve hot with croutons. The addition of a beaten egg or two improves the soup greatly.

Cream of Pea Soup.—Take a pint of canned peas, press through a colander. Scald one quart of milk; as soon as it boils, add the pea puree. To two tablespoonfuls of butter add one tablespoonful of flour, mix well and stir into the soup. Cook until smooth and thick, adding pepper and salt to season.

Julienne Soup.—Take one quart of rich brown stock. Prepare a pint of mixed vegetables, such as coarsely chopped cabbage, celery, turnip and carrot, small onions cut in halves so that they will separate in cups. Cook the vegetables in boiling salted water, using as little as possible; add to the soup stock ten minutes before serving, seasoning well with salt and pepper.

Orange Ice Cream.—Grate the rind of two oranges, add the juice of four, with the juice of one lemon; sugar is added to taste and one quart of thin cream. Freeze as usual. The amount of sugar will vary as to the sweetness of the oranges.

"Puddings, my friend, do a mission fulfill.
They add to the dinner and also the bill;
They cause men to wash, with what ardor they may,
That the meal which forbids them come three times a day."

SEASONABLE FOODS.

Those who enjoy the flavor of curry will doubtless like the following:



Curried Eggs.—Melt one-fourth of a cupful of butter, add one-fourth of a cupful of flour, one-half teaspoonful of salt, one teaspoonful of curry powder, one-fourth of a teaspoonful of paprika, stir to a smooth paste, cook several minutes. Add one cupful each of milk and chicken stock, cook until smooth. Pour over six hard-cooked eggs sliced.

Salmon Mold.—Drain a one-pound can of salmon from the liquor, rinse well and flake. Mix thoroughly one-half teaspoonful each of sugar, salt and flour, one teaspoonful of mustard, a few grains of cayenne, then add two egg yolks, one and one-half tablespoonfuls of melted butter, three-fourths of a cupful of thin cream and one-fourth of a cupful of malt vinegar. Cook in a double boiler, stirring constantly until the mixture thickens. Add three-fourths of a tablespoonful of gelatin, previously soaked in two tablespoonfuls of cold water. Strain and add to the flaked salmon. Fill individual molds and serve with:

Cucumber Sauce.—Beat one-half cupful of heavy cream until stiff, add a few grains of cayenne and two tablespoonfuls of vinegar. Then add a medium-sized cucumber pared, chopped and drained with sufficient onion juice to flavor delicately.

Scalloped Cabbage.—Put one and one-half cupfuls of cooked cabbage, which has been coarsely chopped, into a baking dish with two cupfuls of white sauce, three-fourths of a cupful of cheese, finely minced, arranging the ingredients in layers. Over all sprinkle a cupful of buttered crumbs and bake until the crumbs are brown.

Cocoa.—Mix three tablespoonfuls of cocoa with four of sugar, add one cupful of boiling water and cook five minutes; add one quart of scalding hot milk, and serve with cream and more sugar, if desired.

Pumpkin seeds peeled and the meats kept as whole as possible make a most delicate nut to be used in frostings, salads and in various ways. The getting them ready takes time, but little hands like to do such work.

Nellie Maxwell