

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 tension at Professor Ephraim 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, Woode Swift, are addicted to horse-racing.

CHAPTER I—Continued

"You know this Floyd Garden well?"

Vance nodded. "Fairly well. He's a member of the Far Meadows club and I've often played polo with him. He's a five-goaler and owns a couple of the best ponies in the country. I tried to buy one of them from him once—but that's beside the point. The fact is, young Garden has invited me on several occasions to join him and his little group at the apartment when the out-of-town races were on. It seems he has a direct loud-speaker service from all the tracks, like many of the horse fanatics. The professor disapproves, in a mild way, but he raises no serious objections because Mrs. Garden is rather inclined to sit in and take her chances on a horse now and then."

"Have you ever accepted his invitation?" asked Markham.

"No," Vance told him. Then he glanced up with a far-away look in his eyes. "But I think it might be an excellent idea."

"Come, come, Vance!" protested Markham. "Even if you see some cryptic relationship between the disconnected items of this message you've just received, how, in the name of Heaven, can you take it seriously?"

Vance drew deeply on his cigarette and waited a moment before answering.

"You have overlooked one phrase in the message: 'Equanimity is essential,' he said at length. 'One of the great race-horses of today happens to be named Equanimity. He belongs in the company of such immortals of the turf as Man o' War, Exterminator, Gallant Fox, and Reigh Count. Furthermore, Equanimity is running in the Rivermont Handicap tomorrow.'

"Still I see no reason to take the matter seriously," Markham objected.

Vance ignored the comment and added "Moreover, Doctor Miles Siefert told me at the club the other day that Mrs. Garden had been quite ill for some time with a mysterious malady."

Markham shifted in his chair and broke the ashes from his cigar.

"The affair gets more muddled by the minute," he remarked irritably. "What's the connection between all these commonplace data and that precious phone message of yours?" He waved his hand contemptuously toward the paper which Vance still held.

"I happen to know," Vance answered slowly, "who sent me this message."

"Ah, yes?" Markham was obviously skeptical.

"Quite. It was Doctor Siefert."

Markham showed a sudden interest.

"Would you care to enlighten me as to how you arrived at this conclusion?" he asked in a satirical voice.

"It was not difficult," Vance answered, rising and standing before the empty hearth, with one arm resting on the mantel. "To begin with, I was not called to the telephone personally. Why? Because it was some one I know. To continue, the language of the message bears the earmarks of the medical profession. 'Psychological tension' and 'resists diagnosis' are not phrases ordinarily used by the layman, although they consist of commonplace enough words. To go another step; the message obviously assumes that I am more or less acquainted with the Garden household and the race-track passion of young Garden. Therefore, we get the results that the sender of the message is a doctor whom I know and one who is aware of my acquaintance with the Gardens. The only doctor who fulfills these conditions, and who, incidentally, is middle-aged and cultured and highly judicial—Currie's description, y'know—is Miles Siefert. And, added to this simple deduction, I happen to know that Siefert is a Latin scholar—I once encountered him at the Latin society club-rooms. Another point in my favor is the fact that he is the family physician of the Gardens and would have ample opportunity to

know about the galloping horses—and perhaps about Equanimity in particular—in connection with the Garden household."

"That being the case," Markham protested, "why don't you phone him and find out exactly what's back of his cryptography?"

"My dear Markham—oh, my dear Markham! Siefert would not only indignantly repudiate any knowledge of the message, but would automatically become the first obstacle in any bit of pryin' I might decide to do. The ethics of the medical profession are most fantastic; and Siefert, as becomes his unique position, is a fanatic on the subject. From the fact that he communicated with me in this roundabout way I rather suspect that some grotesque point of honor is involved. Perhaps his conscience overcame him for the moment, and he temporarily relaxed his adherence to what he considers his code of honor. . . . No, no, that course wouldn't do at all. I must ferret out the matter for myself—as he undoubtedly wishes me to do."

"But what is this matter that you feel called upon to ferret out?" persisted Markham. "Granting all you say, I still don't see how you can regard the situation as in any way serious."

"One never knows, does one?" drawled Vance. "Still, I'm rather fond of the horses myself, don't y'know."

Markham seemed to relax and fitted his manner to Vance's change of mood.

"And what do you propose to do?" he asked good naturedly.

Vance looked up whimsically.

"The public prosecutor of New York—that noble defender of the rights of the common people—to wit: the Honorable John F. X. Markham—must grant me immunity and protection before I'll consent to answer."

Markham's eyelids drooped a little as he studied Vance. He was familiar with the serious import that often lay beneath the other's most frivolous remarks.

"Are you planning to break the law?" he asked.

"Oh, yes—quite," he admitted nonchalantly. "Jailable offense, I believe."

Markham studied him for another moment.

"All right," he said, without the slightest trace of lightness. "I'll do what I can for you. What's it to be?"

Vance took another sip of the Napoleon.

"Well, Markham old dear," he announced with a half smile, "I'm going to the Gardens' penthouse tomorrow afternoon and play the horses with the younger set."

As soon as Markham had left that night, Vance's mood changed. A troubled look came into his eyes, and he walked up and down the room pensively.

"I don't like it, Van," he murmured, as if talking to himself. "I don't at all like it. Siefert isn't the type to make a mysterious phone call like that, unless he has a very good reason for doing so. It's quite out of character, don't y'know. He's a dashed conservative chap, and no end ethical. There must be something worrying him deeply. But why the Gardens' apartment? The domestic atmosphere there has always struck me as at least superficially normal—and now a man as dependable as Siefert gets jittery about it to the extent of indulging in shillin'-shocker technique. It's deuced queer."

He stopped pacing the floor and looked at the clock.

"I think I'll make the arrangements. A bit of snooping is highly indicated."

He went into the anteroom, and a moment later I heard him dialing a number on the telephone. When he returned to the library he seemed to have thrown off his depression. His manner was almost flippant.

"We're in for an abominable lunch tomorrow, Van," he announced, pouring himself another pony of cognac. "And we must torture ourselves with the viands at a most ungodly hour—noon. What a time to ingest even good food!" He sighed. "We're lurching with young Garden at his home. Woode Swift will be there and also an insufferable creature named Lowe Hammle, a horsey gentleman from some obscure estate on Long Island. Later we'll be joined by various members of the sporting set, and together we'll indulge in that ancient and fascinatin' pastime of laying wagers on the thoroughbreds."

He rang for Currie and sent him out to fetch a copy of the Morning Telegraph.

"One should be prepared. Oh, quite. It's been years since I handicapped the horses."

Although I was well aware that Vance had some serious object in lurching with young Garden the following day and in participating in the gambling on the races, I had not the slightest suspicion, at the time, of the horrors that were to follow. On the afternoon of April 14 occurred the first grim act of one of the most atrocious multiple crimes of this generation. And to Doctor Siefert must go, in a large measure, the credit for the identification of the criminal, for had he not sent his cryptic and would-be anonymous message to Vance, the truth would probably never have been known.

I shall never forget that fatal Saturday afternoon. And aside from the brutal Garden murder, that afternoon will always remain memor-

able for me because it marked the first mature sentimental episode, so far as I had ever observed, in Vance's life. For once, the cold impersonal attitude of his analytical mind melted before the appeal of an attractive woman.

CHAPTER II

Shortly before noon the next day we arrived at Professor Garden's beautiful skyscraper apartment, and were cordially, and a little exuberantly, greeted by young Garden.

Floyd Garden was a man in his early thirties, erect and athletically built. He was about six feet tall, with powerful shoulders and a slender waist. His hair was almost black, and his complexion swarthy. His manner, while easy and casual, and with a suggestion of swagger, was in no way offensive. He was not a handsome man: his features were too rugged, his eyes set too close together, his ears protruded too much, and his lips were too thin. But he had an undeniable charm, and there was a quiet submerged competency in the way he moved and in the rapidity of his mental reactions.

"There are only five of us for lunch, Vance," he remarked breezily. "The old gentleman is fussing with his test-tubes and Bunsen burners at the university; the mater is having a grand time playing sick. But Pop Hammle is coming—rum old bird, but a good sport; and we'll also be burdened with beloved cousin Woode. You know Swift, I believe, Vance. Queer crab, Woody." He pondered a moment with a wry face.

"Can't figure out just how he fits into this household. Dad and the mater seem inordinately fond of him—sorry for him, perhaps; or maybe he's the kind of serious, sensitive guy they wish I'd turned out to be. I don't dislike Woody, but we have little in common except the horses. Only, he takes his betting too seriously to suit me—he hasn't much money, and his wins or losses mean a lot to him. Of course, he'll go broke in the end."

Vance had been watching Garden covertly during this rambling recital of domestic intimacies.

"I know you hate mysteries, and there's apt to be some funny things happening here this afternoon," Garden continued. "Woode has been acting queer for the past couple of weeks, as if some secret sorrow was gnawing at his mind."

"Any specific psychopathic symptoms?" Vance asked lightly.

"No-o." Garden pursed his lips and frowned thoughtfully. "But he's developed a curious habit of going upstairs to the roof-garden as soon as he's placed a large bet, and he remains there alone until the result of the race has come through."

"Nothing very unusual about that," Vance made a deprecatory motion with his hand. "Many gamblers, d'ye see, are like that."

"You're probably right," Garden admitted reluctantly. "But I wish he'd bet moderately, instead of plunging like a fool whenever he's hot for a horse."

"By the by," asked Vance, "why do you particularly look for strange occurrences this afternoon?"

Garden shrugged.

"The fact is," he replied, after a short pause, "Woody's been losing heavily of late, and today's the day of the big Rivermont Handicap. I have a feeling he's going to put every dollar he's got on Equanimity, who'll undoubtedly be the favorite. . . . Equanimity!" He snorted with undisguised contempt. "That rail-lugger! Probably the second greatest horse of modern times—but what's the use?"

He looked up solemnly.

"And that, Vance, means trouble if Equanimity doesn't come in. It means a blow-up of some kind. I've felt it coming for over a week. It's got me worried. To tell you the truth, I'm glad you picked this day to sit in with us."

"Very interestin' situation," commented Vance. "I agree in the main with what you say regarding Equanimity. But I think you're too harsh, and I'm not convinced that he's a rail-lugger because of any innate passion for wood. . . . But as you were sayin', the psychological situation hereabout has you worried. I gather there's a super-charged atmosphere round this charmin' aerie."

"That's it, exactly," Garden answered almost eagerly. "Super-charged is right. Nearly every day the mater asks, 'How's Woody?' And when the old gentleman comes home from his lab at night he greets me with a left-handed 'Well, my boy, have you seen Woody today?'"

Vance made no comment on these remarks. Instead he asked in a peculiarly flat voice: "Do you consider this recent hyper-tension in the household due entirely to your cousin's financial predicament and his determination to risk all he has on 'e horses?"

Garden started slightly and then settled back in his chair.

"No, damn it!" he answered a little vehemently. "And that's another thing that bothers me. A lot of the golliwogs we're harboring are due to Woode's cuckoo state of mind, but there are other queer invisible animals springing up and down the corridors. I can't figure it out. The mater's illness doesn't make sense either. And there's a funny business of some kind going on among the gang that drifts in here nearly every afternoon to play races."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

New Suits Stress Contrast Wools

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



ALMOST any suit is trumps in spring fashions. The great variety of wool fabric has been an inspiration to the designers, who have outdone themselves in creating irresistible suits ranging in type from the most casual sports model to the most formal dressmaker suits.

The outstanding appeal of suits this spring is their ingenious play of contrast—the most fascinating contrasts in weaves and in patternings, some plaided, some striped, others such as bright tweeds with multi-colored nubbings and other amazing novelty woolsens, these contrasted with plain most fetchingly.

The old story of mannish tailored suits is given several brand new twists this season, greatly due to revived fashion interest in fabrics that were your grandmother's favorites when she was a girl.

The old-fashioned, now new-fashioned twills which are showing such strong revival are as adaptable to dressmaker suits, which are femininity itself, with their quaint pleurms and soft stitched lapels as they are to strictly classic tailleurs. Gray, beige, postman blue and navy are favorites in twills.

Sheer wools and wool crepes in solid or novelty patterned fabrics answer to the call for bolero and eton jacket suits. Often the bolero, or some such jacket type, is of the novelty wool topping a suit or tailored dress of monotone weave. These feminine devotes in refreshingly versatile moods will be flourishing the entire season through and we've seen them with linings and blouses in bright or pastel taffeta with either swing or full-pleated skirts.

For planning a spring wardrobe, the three-piece suit is a logical beginning. By three-piece we mean any type suit or tailored wool dress you may choose plus a weather-resisting topcoat or a debonair cape (capas are so very smart) in a gorgeous woolen that accents color glory and weave to an exciting degree.

Your suit choice may be delightfully frivolous and youthful, stressing a perk jigger coat, (the young set adores this new type) especially if it is of gay tapestry plaid woolen in colors of saddle-tan and brown as centered in the group pictured. Note the small pointed collar and diagonal slash pockets.

The skirt in saddle-tan shetland-type tweed has three stitched gores in front, and the matching border-stitched tuxedo of the coat buttons down on either side of the collar.

Perhaps you prefer to top a lustrous fleece wool in saddle-tan with a finger-tip swaggar'coat that fastens high at the neck with an unusual leather clasp, as illustrated to the left. The suit itself has five leather buttons down the front of its jacket, because leather trimmings are quite the rage this season.

In the model to the right the color contrast theory is worked out stunningly in that the collarless cutaway jacket worn with this smart finger-tip jacket-suit of men's wear flannel, is of gray and red check woolen with a red belt and ascot for accents. Topped with its jaunty swaggar coat in a gray herringbone wool the idea of using three contrasting wool weaves is demonstrated to a nicety. And so in conclusion, whatever system you use, in a swank suit, you'll lead in fashion-rightness—and with finesse.

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TAFFETA WITH NET

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



Net enters into many phases of the mode this season, not the least important of which is its use for daytime dresses and for tailored themes, in contrast to its sprightly bouffancy for full-skirted party frocks. The very goodlooking tailored afternoon dress here shown is of black net of bemberg yarn banded with black taffeta. You'll find this gown a friend indeed all spring and all summer. Just now it is ideal to wear under your coat. Top with a gay little chapeau and you will be ready to go anywhere social appointments may call.

ACCESSORY NOTES ON SPRING STYLES

Some of the trimmed sports frocks this spring are made of men's shirting. Chambrays in dusty roses, blues and olive greens, brown cottons splashed with small white figures and gray and white striped silks make both dresses and play suits combining skirt, blouse and shorts (longer than last year). Tucked bosoms and vests and pocket accents whose stripes run contrary to those in the blouse are among the mannish accents which have been borrowed for these feminine frocks.

Accessories hold a bright spot in the spring style spotlight. Several Fifth avenue shops display entire accessory ensembles in patent leather. Big patent leather bags, patent leather daisy boutonnières and black suede shoes tipped with the same shining leather are designed to wear with suits.

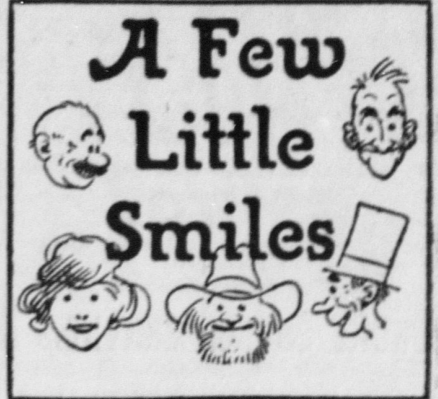
Other accessory notes are twin boutonnières to be worn on each lapel of a suit jacket. Sometimes they are rich carnations of the same color, again feather butterflies with bright spots on their wings and again gay feather fancies like those worn in Tyrolean hats.

Romantic Motif Marks New Gowns for Evening Wear

Embodying the glamour of the era when Vienna danced to the rhythms of Johann Strauss' immortal melodies, the new evening gowns recapture the flowerlike grace of a romantic century.

Starched nets and chiffons, white and pastel colored organzas and stiffened laces are the most important fabrics and pastel colorings are stressed.

Bodices for the most part are simple, many being adorned with big clusters of chiffon flowers in contrasting shades. Girdles are narrow and emphasize slender waist lines.



QUITE SENSITIVE

The other day I heard of one of these baby autos speeding 50 miles an hour on one of our main highways. And every 50 feet the little trinket would hop right up in the air about five feet. A motor cop finally overtook the midget motor and brought it to a stop.

"What's the big idea of that car jumpin' that a-way?" asked the cop.

The driver answered:

"Why, officer, there's nothing wrong with the car. You see, I—I've got hic—the hiccups!"—Vancouver Province.

Atmosphere

"Take this down," ordered the writer of word thrillers. "One-eyed Jake tip-toed stealthily across the shop floor and paused. Resting one hand on the counter, he listened intently. All was still as death; you could have heard a cough-drop."

"Is this a funny story?" asked the secretary. "You mean heard a 'pin drop,' don't you?"

"Write 'cough-drop' and don't argue," said the author, "this burglary is in a drug store."

ACCOMMODATING



"You say Harry proposed to you last evening?"

"Yes, and I accepted him."

"Oh, my! I proposed to him today and he accepted me."

Turn About

He stood regarding the badly aged motor car. "Oh, well," he said, "turn about is fair play."

"What do you mean by that?" asked the other man who had stopped to look on.

"Why," exclaimed the motor car's owner, "it broke me first."—Gloucester, England Journal.

Not a Hoot

Gas—The horn on your car must be broken.

Mr. X—No, it's just indifferent.

Gas—Indifferent! What do you mean?

Mr. X—It just doesn't give a hoot.

Annapolis Log.

Cure

Voice Over Phone—I can't sleep, Doctor. Can you do anything for me?

Doctor—Hold the phone and I'll sing you a lullaby.—Sheboygan Press.

HIGHBROWS



First Mouse—I'm very fond of Dickens!

Second Mouse—I find encyclopedias more to my taste!

Just Because

A young man took his grandmother to the pictures. After ten minutes the old lady wanted to go out.

"The seat's so uncomfortable," she complained.

"No wonder," he exclaimed. "You haven't turned it down."

Back Again

"At twenty you left the farm and came to the city. And for 25 years you've been working very hard. What for?"

"To get money to live in the country."

No Return

"What did she do when he broke off her engagement?"

"Oh, she just flung her engagement ring on to her right hand and stalked out."

Impossible

Judge—What possible excuse could you have for acquitting the prisoner?

Foreman—Insanity, sir.

Judge—What, all twelve of you?

—Omaha World-Herald.

Poor Old Grammar!

Pedagogue (high-hat for teacher)—Why is it wrong for me to say, "I have went?"

Scholar—On account of you're still here, Ped.