

# 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, Woody Swift, are addicted to horse-racing. Vance says that "Equanimity" is a horse running next day in the Rivermont handicap. Vance is convinced that the message was sent by Dr. Siefert, the Gardens' family physician. He arranges to have lunch next day at the Gardens' penthouse. Vance is greeted by Floyd Garden and meets Lowe Hamble, an elderly follower of horse racing. Floyd expresses concern over Swift's queer actions. Mrs. Garden, supposedly ill, comes downstairs and places a \$100 bet on a horse.

### CHAPTER II—Continued

"Right-o, Baby—face," grinned Garden. "Step into our parlor."  
She started forward, and hesitated momentarily as she caught sight of Vance and me.  
"Oh, by the way, Zalia,"—Garden put the receiver down and rose—"let me present Mr. Vance and Mr. Van Dine. . . Miss Graem."

The girl staggered back dramatically and lifted her hands to her head in mock panic.  
"Oh, Heaven protect me!" she exclaimed. "Philo Vance, the detective! Is this a raid?"

Vance bowed graciously.  
"Have no fear, Miss Graem," he smiled. "I'm merely a fellow criminal. And, as you see, I'm dragging Mr. Van Dine along the downward path with me."

At this moment Garden pressed forward the key on the switch box, and in a moment the voice we had heard earlier was again coming through the amplifier.  
"Coming out at Rivermont, and here's the new line: 20, 6, 4, 8 to 5 scratch twice, 3, 20, 15, 10, 15. . . Who was it wanted the run-down at Texas?"

Garden cut the amplifier.  
He turned to his cousin. "And you, Woody?"  
Swift shook his head. "Not this race."  
"Saving it all for Equanimity, eh? Right-o."

Despite the superficial buoyancy of the gathering, I could detect an undercurrent of extreme tension and expectancy; and I made mental note of various little occurrences during the first hour or so.

One incident connected with Swift puzzled me greatly. I had noticed that he and Zalia Graem had not spoken to each other during the entire time they had been in the drawing-room. Once they had brushed against each other near Garden's table, and each, as if instinctively, had drawn resentfully to one side. Garden had cocked his head at them irritably and said:  
"Aren't you two on speaking terms yet—or is this feud to be permanent? . . . Why don't you kiss and make up and let the gaiety of the party be unanimous?"

Miss Graem had proceeded as if nothing had happened, and Swift had merely given his cousin a quick, indignant glance.

### CHAPTER III

"The great moment approaches!" Garden announced, and though he spoke with sententious gaiety, I could detect signs of strain in his manner.  
Kroon rose, finished the drink which stood on the table before him, and dabbing his mouth with a neatly folded handkerchief which he took from his breast pocket, he moved toward the archway.

"My mind was made up yesterday," he spoke across the room, as if including every one. "Put me down in your fateful little book for \$100 on Hyjinx to win and \$200 on the same filly to place. And you can add \$200 on Head Start to show. Making it, all told, half a grand. That's my contribution to the afternoon's festivities."

"Not deserting us, are you Cecil?" Garden called after him.  
"Frightfully sorry," Kroon answered, looking back. "I'd love to stay for the race, but a legal conference at a maiden aunt's is scheduled for 4:50." He waved his hand and, with a "Cheerio," continued down the hall.

Madge Weatherby immediately picked up her cards and moved to Zalia Graem's table, where the two women began a low, whispered conversation.  
Garden's inquiring glance moved from one to another of the party. At this moment a young woman of unusual attractiveness appeared in the archway and stood there hesitantly, looking shyly at Garden. She wore a nurse's uniform of immaculate white, with white shoes and stockings, and a starched white cap set at a grotesque angle on the back of her head. She could not have been over thirty; yet there was a maturity in her calm, brown eyes, and evidence of great capability in the reserve of her expression and in the firm contour of her chin. She wore no make-up, and her chestnut hair was parted in the middle and brushed back simply over her ears. She presented a striking contrast

to the two other women in the room.  
"Hello, Miss Beeton," Garden greeted her pleasantly. "I thought you'd be having the afternoon off, since the mater's well enough to go shopping. . . What can I do for you? Care to join the madhouse and hear the races?"  
"Oh, no. I've too many things to do." She moved her head slightly to indicate the rear of the house.  
"But if you don't mind, Mr. Garden," she added timidly, "I would like to bet two dollars on Azure Star to win, and to come in second, and to come in third."  
Every one smiled covertly, and Garden chuckled.

Vance, who had been watching the girl with more interest than he usually showed in a woman, leaned forward.  
"I say, Garden, just a moment." He spoke incisively. "I think Miss Beeton's choice is an excellent one—however she may have arrived at it." Then he nodded to the nurse.  
"Miss Beeton, I'll be very happy to see that your bet on Azure Star is placed." He turned again to Garden. "Will your book-maker take \$200 across the board on Azure Star?"  
"Will he? He'll grab it with both hands," Garden replied. "But why?"  
"Then it's settled," said Vance quickly. "That's my bet. And two

dollars of it in each position belongs to Miss Beeton."  
"That's perfect with me, Vance." And Garden jotted down the wager in his ledger.  
I noticed that during the brief moments that Vance was speaking to the nurse and placing his wager on Azure Star, Swift was glowering at him through half-closed eyes. It was not until later that I understood the significance of that look. The nurse cast a quick glance at Swift, and then spoke with simple directness.  
"You are very kind, Mr. Vance." Then she added: "I will not pretend I don't know who you are, even if Mr. Garden had not called you by name." She stood looking straight at Vance with calm appraisal; then she turned and went back down the hall.

Swift stood up and walked to the cabinet with its array of bottles. He filled a whiskey glass with Bourbon and drank it down. Then he walked slowly to the table where his cousin sat. Garden had just finished the call to Hannix.  
"I'll give you my bet now, Floyd," Swift said hoarsely. He pressed one finger on the table, as if for emphasis. "I want \$10,000 on Equanimity to win."  
Garden's eyes moved anxiously to the other.  
"I was afraid of that, Woody," he said in a troubled tone. "But if I were you—"

"I'm not asking you for advice," Swift interrupted in a cold steady voice; "I'm asking you to place a bet."  
Garden did not take his eyes from the man's face. He said merely: "I think you're a damned fool."  
"Your opinion of me doesn't interest me either," Swift's eyelids drooped menacingly, and a hard look came into his set face.  
Garden capitulated.  
"It's your funeral," he said, and turning his back on his cousin, he took up the gray hand set again and spun the dial with determination.

Swift walked back to the bar and poured himself another generous drink of Bourbon.  
"Hello, Hannix," Garden said into the transmitter. "I'm back again, with an additional bet. Hold on to your chair or you'll lose your balance. I want ten grand on Equanimity to win. . . Yes, that's what I said: ten G-strings—ten thousand iron men. Can you handle it? Odds probably won't be over two to one. . . Right-o."  
He replaced the receiver and tilted back in his chair just as Swift, headed for the hall, was passing him.

Garden, apparently deeply perturbed, kept his eyes on the retreating figure. Then, as if on sudden impulse, he stood up quickly and called out: "Just a minute,



The Two Women Began a Low, Whispered Conversation.

Woody. I want to say a word to you." And he stepped after him.  
I saw Garden put his arm around Swift's shoulder as the two disappeared down the hall.  
When Garden returned to the room his face was a trifle pale, and his eyes were downcast. As he approached our table he shook his head dejectedly.  
"I tried to argue with him," he remarked to Vance. "But it was no use; he wouldn't listen to reason. He turned nasty. . . Poor devil! If Equanimity doesn't come in he's done for." He looked directly at Vance. "I wonder if I did the right thing in placing that bet for him. But, after all, he's of age."  
A bell rang somewhere in the apartment, and a few moments later Sneed appeared in the archway.  
"Pardon me, sir," he said to Garden, "but Miss Graem is wanted on the other telephone."  
Zalia Graem stood up quickly and raised one hand to her forehead in a gesture of dismay.  
"Who on earth or in the waters under the earth can that be?" Her face cleared. "Oh, I know." Then she stepped up to Sneed. "I'll take the call in the den." And she hurried from the room.

Garden a few moments later turned in his chair and announced: "They're coming out at Rivermont. Say your prayers, children . . ."

As the radio tubes warmed up, McElroy's well-known voice gained in volume over the loud speaker: ". . . and Equanimity is now making trouble at the post. Took the cue from Head Start. . . Now they're both back in their stalls—it looks as if we might get a—Yes! They're off! And to a good even start. Hyjinx has dashed into the lead; Azure Star comes next; and Heat Lightning is close behind. The others are bunched. I can't tell one from the other yet. Wait a second. Here they come past us—and it's Hyjinx on top now, by two lengths; and behind her is Train Time; and—yes, it's Sublimite, by a head, or a nose, or a neck—it doesn't matter—it's Sublimite anyway. And there's the Risky Lad creeping up on Sublimite. . . And now they're going round the first turn, with Hyjinx still in the lead. The relative positions of the ones out front haven't changed yet. . . They're in the back stretch, and Hyjinx is still ahead by half a length; Train Time has moved up and holds his second position by a length and a half ahead of Roving Flirt, who's in third place. Azure Star is a length behind Roving Flirt. Equanimity is pocketed."

At this point in the broadcast Zalia Graem appeared suddenly in the archway and stood with her eyes fixed on the radio, her hands sunk in the pockets of her tailored jacket. ". . . They're rounding the far turn. Equanimity has improved his position and is getting into his famous stride. Hyjinx has dropped back and Roving Flirt has taken the lead by a head, with Train Time second, by a length, in front of Azure Star, who is running third and making a grand effort. . . And now they're in the stretch. Azure Star has come to the front and is a full length in the lead. Train Time is making a great bid for this classic and is still in second place, a length behind Azure Star. Roving Flirt is right behind him. Hyjinx has dropped back and it looks as if she was no longer a serious contender. Equanimity is pressing hard and is now in sixth place. He hasn't much time, but he's running a beautiful race and may come up front yet. . . And here they come to the finish. The leaders are straight out—there won't be much change. Just a second. Here they come. . . and. . . the winner is Azure Star by two lengths. Next is Roving Flirt. And a length behind him is Train Time. Upper Shelf finished fourth. . ."

"Not such a hot race," Miss Graem remarked with a toss of her head. "I'll just about break even. . . Now I'll go and finish my phone call." And she turned back down the hall.  
Garden seemed ill at ease and, for the second time that afternoon, mixed himself a highball.  
Just then Mrs. Garden bustled into the room.  
"Don't tell me I'm too late!" she pleaded excitedly.  
"All over but the O. K., mater," Garden informed her.  
"And what did I do?" The woman came forward and dropped wearily into an empty chair.  
"The usual," grinned Garden. "A Grand Score? Your noble steed didn't score at all. Condolences. But it's not official yet. We'll be getting the O. K. in a minute now."  
"Oh, dear!" sighed Mrs. Garden despondently.  
"Well," said Garden, "Mr. Vance, the eminent deposer of crimes and ponies, can now take a luxurious vacation. He's the possessor of thirty-six hundred and forty dollars—of which thirty-six dollars and forty cents goes to our dear nurse. . . And Woody, of course. . . His voice trailed off.  
"What did Woody do?" demanded Mrs. Garden, sitting up stiffly in her chair.  
"I'm frightfully sorry, mater,"—her son groped for words—"but Woody didn't use his head. I tried to dissuade him, but it was no go. . ."  
"Well, what did Woody do?" persisted Mrs. Garden.  
Garden hesitated, and before he could formulate an answer, a paralyzing sound, like a pistol shot, broke the tense silence.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## A Few Little Smiles

COMMON PRACTICE

They were a couple of lads from the "upper crust," making an Atlantic crossing on the same liner, but they hadn't been introduced. Consequently, when the ship sank and they found themselves swimming together, neither spoke for several miles.  
Finally one of them coughed tentatively. "Er—beg pardon," he began, "do you mind my speaking to you?"  
"Not at all," replied the other. "What can I do for you?"  
"Well, I'd appreciate it awfully if you'd direct me toward New York."  
—Washington Post.

### THE HABIT

"Do you think our boy will leave footprints on the sands of time?"  
"He'd leave 'em anywhere. Just look out in the hall."

### Doggy

A dear old lady entered a shop and said, "I want one of those water bowls labelled 'Dog' please."  
The shopkeeper, however, had only plain bowls in stock, and expressed his regret at being unable to meet her wishes.  
The old lady, on second thought, agreed to accept a plain bowl, remarking, "After all, the puppies are too young to read."  
—Philadelphia Inquirer.

### Just a Call

Actor—What about the salary?  
Manager—Suppose we call it \$250 a week?  
Actor—All right.  
Manager—Of course you understand that \$250 a week is merely what we call it—you will get \$25.—Atlanta Constitution.

### Turn About

Pamela—Isn't Spot a naughty dog, mummy? He ate my doll's slipper.  
Mother—Yes, darling. He ought to be punished!  
Pamela—I did punish him. I went straight to the kennel and drank his milk.

### What Price Art?

Motorist—I will give you \$5 for that picture.  
Artist—Won't you wait until I have finished it?  
Motorist—No, I want the canvas to end a puncture.

### Dread of the Future

"What day in human history caused the greatest woe and anxiety?" asked the history teacher.  
"Speaking off-hand," said the philosophical student, "I would say tomorrow."

### Naturally

Niece—They say there are more marriages of blondes than brunettes. Why is that?  
Bachelor Uncle—H'm! Naturally the light-headed ones go first.

### DEBTS INCLUDED

"We don't meet people who belong to the Don't Worry Clubs these days."  
"No, the tendency today is to belong to Don't Hurry Clubs."

### Initiative Not Required

"It is always a mistake to start a quarrel," remarked the cautious friend.  
"You don't have to start quarrels these days," answered Senator Sorghum. "You can always find one ready made whenever you feel like mixing in."

### Cool Job

Where did Tony learn to swim so wonderfully?  
He used to be a traffic cop in Venice.—The Automoblist.

### Bull

"That new farm-hand is terribly dumb."  
"How's that?"  
"He found some milk bottles in the grass and insisted he had found a cow's nest."—U. S. Coast Guard.

### On the Right Path

Moe—My ambition is to be a great doctor. I want to become a bone specialist.  
Rose—Well, you have a good head for it.—B'nai B'rith Magazine.

## STAR DUST

Movie • Radio

By VIRGINIA VALE

A PICTURE that will endear itself to every dog lover in the world and every humanitarian, based on that heart-warming institution known as "The Seeing Eye," is planned by Warner Brothers. As you probably know, "The Seeing Eye" is a school at Morristown, N. J., supported by public subscription which trains police dogs to lead blind men.

Started soon after the war by a Mrs. Eustis who had seen what wonderful work was done in Switzerland by giving blind men dog companions, "The Seeing Eye" has trained hundreds of dogs, who have completely changed the lives of their formerly helpless masters. The dogs lead their men through traffic tangles with perfect safety—but better even than that, provide understanding companionship.

Far away in Boston making personal appearances, the Ritz Brothers heard that the Twentieth Century-Fox studio planned to separate them, putting brother Jim into "Last Year's Kisses" with Alice Faye, Tony Martin, Don Ameche and others. They complained by telegram, they howled over long-distance telephone, they objected with such embittered frenzy that the studio had to give in. All three Ritz Brothers will appear in the picture. The appearance of Alice Faye with the boys should add to the fun of the picture.



Alice Faye

Gertrude Niesen's first song number in "Top of the Town" is "Where Are You," her lucky number. Jimmy McHugh and Harold Adamson wrote it for her three years ago, to use when auditioning for a big commercial radio program. She got the job. Last fall while in Hollywood for a vacation after a strenuous stretch on the radio, she sang it at a party and was immediately offered a screen contract by producers present.

While producers of "Gone With the Wind" are still arguing over who should play the leading roles, Paramount is stealing a march on them. They have bought a story called "Gettysburg" which has the same setting and similar characters and are putting it into production at once.

As a fitting salute to Spring, Warner Brothers have released "The King and the Chorus Girl" and United Artists have put out "History Is Made at Night." They are both giddy and romantic and have set everyone to arguing over who is the greater matinee idol, Fernand Gravet or Charles Boyer. They are both grand romantic heroes. "The King and the Chorus Girl" is something of a nine-days wonder because it is a Warner Brothers musical without a big production number to interrupt the gaiety. And "History Is Made at Night" is completely baffling because it mixes spectacular scenes and grim tragedy with farcical situations.

Talent scouts from the motion-picture studios are suspected of doing their hunting nowadays in nurseries, for suddenly all Hollywood is in a dither over child prodigies. If you heard Betty Jaynes, the fifteen-year-old opera star on Bing Crosby's program a few weeks ago, just before she started work for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, you may have marveled at her talent. She is practically middle-aged, though, compared to their newest discovery, for the new contract player is Suzanne Larson, aged ten, who will be featured in a musical, "B Above High C" which gives you an idea of her voice range.

ODDS AND ENDS . . . Freddie Bartholomew stayed up past his bedtime to see the preview of "Captains Courageous," the screen version of Kipling's immortal novel and the lad's greatest picture since coming to Hollywood. . . Franchot Tone recently celebrated his birthday with a party at a popular Hollywood night club. . . In her current picture, "When Love Is Young," Virginia Bruce wears a dress that required 318 yards of material. . . "Anthony Adverse" got a cool reception when it was given its premiere in Paris recently. The Parisians were not at all pleased with the way Napoleon was presented in the picture. . . While Gloria Swanson's return to films has hit a temporary snag, those in the know say all the present difficulties will soon be ironed out. . . Deanna Durbin is about the busiest young lady in Hollywood. Just as soon as she completes "One Hundred Men and a Girl" she will go into production on another picture. —Western Newspaper Union.

## My Favorite Recipe

By Helen Twelvetrees

Creamed Eggs With Chili and Rice

To two cupsful of well-seasoned medium white sauce add one teaspoonful chili powder and six hard-cooked eggs, cut in quarters. Meanwhile, cook one cupful of rice, season it to suit the taste and arrange in a border around a platter. Pour the egg mixture into the center. Serves six.

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## Smiles

### A Reminder

"Well, dear," said Blair after tea had been cleared away, "what are you planning to do tonight?"  
Mrs. Blair shrugged her shoulders.  
"Nothing special," she replied. "I'll probably write a letter or two, read, listen to the wireless, and so on."  
"I see," he replied. "And when you come to the 'so on,' don't forget my shirt buttons."

### SMART FELLER

Sunday School Teacher—Now children, Samson was safe as long as he kept what?  
Bright Pupil—The key to his locks.

### How Could It Be?

"Yes, sir, these are the ruins of a building that was in existence 2,500 years ago," declared the guide.  
"What rubbish!" one member of the tourist party answered. "Why, it's only 1937 now."

### And So He Did

Judge—Why did you steal the woman's carpet?  
Tramp—I did not steal it.  
Judge—She says you stole it.  
Tramp—She said, "Take that carpet and beat it."

### Ry

## alotabs

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### Hasten Early

Hasten in the morning so that by evening thy work for the day be accomplished.

## FROM GIRL TO WOMAN

Mrs. J. A. Hagler of 1732 Wilkinson St., Charlotte, N. C., said: "I owe much to Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription for the help it gave me when I was just a girl. I would have a great deal of suffering, due to minor functional disturbances. My mother had me take Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription and its tonic effects proved to be what I needed to stimulate my appetite and to relieve my disturbances. Buy now of your dealer."

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## THE CHEERFUL CHERUB

Im studying astronomy. It rests my mind somehow To think about those far-off worlds—Our own's so muddled up now.