

The Kennel Murder Case

By S. S. VAN DINE

When Vance and I arrived at the Coc house, Markham and Sergeant Heath were already there. There was a detective from the homicide bureau sitting glumly on the front steps.

We went to the second floor, walked back toward the front of the house, and entered Grassi's quarters. The curtains were drawn and all the lights were on.

Heath and Markham stood at the foot of Grassi's bed, looking at the prostrate figure lying there. Sitting in a straight chair, on the opposite side of the bed, was a capable looking man of about forty.

"This is Doctor Lobsenz," Markham informed Vance. "Gamble called him in."

Doctor Lobsenz looked up, nodded, and went on about his work with swift efficiency.

Grassi lay on his back, clad in white silk pajamas. He was ghastly pale, and the arm nearest us moved restlessly on the sheets, like that of a person under the influence of hyoscin. There was an area of blood, perhaps 12 inches in diameter, on the sheet at his left side nearest the doctor. His pajama coat was also stained with blood. His eyes were closed, but his lips were moving incoherently.

Presently the doctor rose. "I think that's all I can do for him at the moment, Mr. Markham," he said. "I'll send for the ambulance immediately."

Markham nodded. "Thank you, Doctor."

Then he turned to Vance. "Grassi was stabbed through the left arm. Doctor Lobsenz says it is not a dangerous wound."

Vance's eyes were on Grassi's pallid face. Without looking up he spoke. "Just what is the nature of the wound, doctor?"

"He was stabbed at the outer border of the biceps tendon, where it crosses the dimple of the anti-cubital fossa. The thrust punctured the median basilic vein and caused a profuse hemorrhage. But it luckily missed the basilic artery."

"What shaped weapon would you say was used?" asked Vance.

The doctor hesitated. "The wound was a bit ragged, and of a rather peculiar conformation; it was not made with a knife, but with some instrument like a very thick awl."

"Could it have been a small dagger with a diamond-shaped blade?"

"Yes, very easily."

Vance nodded. "You're taking him to the hospital?"

"Yes, immediately," the doctor told him. "I gave him three grains of sodium-amylal by mouth. It'll quiet him tonight and he'll be able to return here tomorrow. His arm will be in a sling for a few days, but unless there is an infection, there's no danger."

"Is he in shape to be questioned for a while before you take him to the hospital?" Vance asked.

The doctor bent over Grassi, felt his pulse, and looked at his pupils.

"Oh, yes." He walked toward the door. "The ambulance won't be here for half an hour." He went into the hall where Gamble was standing.

"Where's the phone?" we heard him ask the butler.

Doctor Lobsenz was no sooner out of the room than Grassi opened his eyes and looked up at us, shifting in the bed and trying to assume a more upright position. Vance arranged the pillows under his shoulders and drew up the sheet.

"Thank God you've come!" Grassi said, his eyes resting on Vance. "After all that has occurred today—then to have this happen. It's terrible! I hope I never see this house again." He gave a snudder and his eyes closed.

"Well, anyway, you weren't killed," Vance murmured.

He was now walking around the room. He looked carefully at the door, tried the knob; studied the arrangement of Grassi's shoes near the foot of the bed; opened the closet door and looked inside; moved to the east window, opened the shade and drew it again; took the lid off a small ivory clothes hamper, scrutinized the contents and replaced the lid; studied the arrangement of the furniture; and finally switched the lights off and on again.

Grassi's lids were half-closed, but I could see that his eyes followed every move that Vance made. When Vance had switched the lights back on, Grassi lifted himself on one elbow.

"What are you searching for?" he demanded. "What right have you to come in here and take advantage of my helplessness?"

Vance sat down in a chair beside the bed and calmly took out a cigarette, lighting it with leisurely deliberation.

"Is it not," he asked, "the custom in your country, Mr. Grassi, to look over a room in which a crime—or an attempted crime—has been committed?"

Huey Described As a Loving Father

Miss Rose Long, Daughter of the Kingfish, Tells Newspapermen That "Pop's" the Stuff.



New York.—Above is a most recent picture of Miss Rose Long, daughter of "Kingfish" Senator Huey P. Long and Mrs. Long of Louisiana. Miss Long was here with her mother on a shopping tour.

In an interview with newspapermen, the comely Miss Long described her highly-publicized father as the "lovingest, kindest dad in the world."

Vance nodded. "Thank you, Doctor, and good luck. . . . And now, Markham, suppose we go downstairs to the library and do a bit of thinking—although it's a beastly hour for mentation."

After Grassi, accompanied by Doctor Lobsenz, had departed, Vance closed the library doors and walked to the large center table.

"There it is, Markham, old dear," he said with a grim smile, pointing to the Chinese dagger before him.

The dagger lay on the library table in almost exactly the same spot where we had left it the afternoon before; but now there was undried blood upon it and its condition told us, only too plainly, that it was the weapon which had been used to strike thru Grassi's arm.

"But why," asked Markham with a puzzled frown, should the man who attempted to kill Grassi bring the weapon back here to the library?"

"Probably," replied Vance, "for the same reason that the person who stabbed Archer and Brisbane Coe put the dagger in the vase in this same room. At least there's a certain consistency in the actions of our stabber."

"You think," asked Markham, "that the same person who stabbed the Coes attempted Grassi's life also?"

"Why leap at conclusions?" sighed Vance. "There are so many other things to be ascertained before we can reach any intelligent conclusion."

"For instance?"

Vance arranged himself comfortably in a large chair.

"Well," he said, inhaling deeply on his cigarette. "I could endure to hear the various persons inside and outside the house chant their runes as to what they know of tonight's happenings. . . . And there are other things which might bear casual scrutiny—to wit: Why did Grassi's call for help not arouse Miss Lake on the third floor ere it penetrated to Gamble's ears? And what hath yon Cerebus on the front stone steps to say about those who may have come and gone tonight? And where, and doing what, was the subtle Mr. Liang during the upheaval? And also what of the doughty guard which I asked to have stationed in Archer Coe's bedroom tonight?"

Heath, who during the entire time we had been at the Coc house had been in a state of silent but aggressive indecision, stood up and squared his shoulders.

"Well, Mr. Vance, we will get all of your questions answered pronto. I'm

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MACHINERY SHOULD BE INSPECTED BEFORE WORK

Get your farm machinery ready for work before the spring rush starts, urges Professor David Weaver, agricultural engineer at N. C. State College.

The first step is to inspect all machinery carefully, he says, and make an inventory of repairs needed and the parts to be replaced.

The parts should be ordered as early as possible so they will arrive before the machines must be used, he explains, and the repair work scheduled so that the machinery to be used first will be repaired first.

Look into the disk harrow bearings, examine the plow points, handles, and braces, ascertain the number of new parts needed, note the parts that need resharpening, tightening or cleaning. All harness gear should be gone over thoroughly, cleaned and oiled when necessary. See that there are enough seed plates to handle all types of seed to be sown with the planter.

Cultivators, mowing machines, and binders should be gone over carefully. New blades, bearings, sickles, rollers gears, or chains may be needed. These machines should be so repaired and lubricated that they will operate smoothly and efficiently.

This is only a brief outline of the things to be checked, Weaver points out, but the farmer who operates the machines should not have trouble in locating the defects if he gives them a careful inspection.

CARD OF THANKS

We wish to express our thanks to our many friends and neighbors for their kindness and helpfulness during the illness and death of our father, Carroll Trivett.

Clark Trivett, Brothers and Sisters.

An alarming decrease in the catch of fish along the North Carolina coast has caused fishermen in the Manteo section to organize in quest of government aid to tide them over the lean winter.

telling the world I'd like to get the answers myself. I asked that detective out front who'd been in here tonight, and he said nobody. But we'll ask him again."

"Come here, Sullivan," he bawled; and the dejected figure we had passed on the front steps came into the library.

"A guy's been stabbed here," Heath blustered. "You told me no one had come in or gone out the front door. But this is serious business, and we want you to wrack your brain, if any, and tell us what you know."

Detective Sullivan was both abashed and defiant.

"I told you, Sergeant," he insisted, "that I've been sitting on those steps since seven o'clock tonight and nothing or nobody, so much as a cockroach, has passed me, goin' or comin'."

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK)

The Philippine islands exported 5,324,874 cigars to the United States last September, less than one-fourth the exports for September, 1933.

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