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"SALADA" TEA

161

'Fresh from the gardens'

The Bishop Murder Case

A PHILO VANCE STORY

BY S. S. VAN DINE

SYNOPSIS

A man known as Cock Robin is found with an arrow in his heart; another, Johnny Sprigg, is found with a bullet through the top of his head. District Attorney Markham calls in Philo Vance, who claims the murders are founded on nursery rhymes and are the work of a maniac.

Those associated with the case are; Prof. Dillard, his niece Belle, and his protege Sigurd Arnesson, also a professor of mathematics. John Pardee, a neighbor with a passion for chess; Mrs. Drukker and her son, Adolph. Mrs. Drukker is mentally unbalanced and Adolph is a cripple, with a super-brain.

Mrs. Drukker tells how the murderer paid her a terrifying visit the previous night. Vance learns that Adolph Drukker lied as to his whereabouts on the morning of Robin's death. Vance question Prof. Dillard again. He learns Pardee played chess the previous night and that he and Drukker had a heated argument. Belle Dillard and Arnesson had gone to the theatre.

CHAPTER XXIV.

At that moment the front door opened and Arnesson came in. He stared at us in mock astonishment; then he caught sight of Belle Dillard.

"Hallo, sis," he called to her pleasantly. 'In the hands of the *gendarmerie*, I see." He flashed us an amused look. "Why the conclave? This house is becoming a regular police station. Hunting for clews of Sprigg's murderer? Ha! Bright youth done away with by his jealous professor, and that sort of thing, eh? . . . Hope you chaps haven't been putting Diana the Huntress through a third degree."

"Nothing of the kind," the girl spoke up. "They've been most considerate. And I've been telling them what an old fogy you are—bringing me home at half past twelve.

"I think I was very indulgent," grinned Arnesson. "Much too late for a child like you to be out."

"It must be terrible to be senile and—and mathematically inclined," she retorted with some heat, and ran upstairs.

Arnesson shrugged his shoulders and looked after her until she had disappeared. Then he fixed a cynical eye on Markham.

"Well, what glad tidings do you brings? Any news about the latest victim?" He led the way back to the drawing room. "You know, I miss that lad. He'd gone far. Rotten shame he had to be named Johnny Sprigg. Even 'Peter Piper' would have been safer. Nothing happened to Peter Piper aside from the pepper episode; and you couldn't very well work that up into a murder. . . ."

"We have nothing to report, Arnesson," Markham broke in, nettled by the man's flippancy. "The situation remains unchanged."

"Just dropped in for a social call, presume. Staying for lunch?"

"We reserve the right," said Markham coldly, "to investigate the case in whatever manner we deem advisable. Nor are we accountable to you for our actions."

"So! Something *has* happened that irks you." Arnesson spoke with sarcasm. " thought I had been accepted as a coadjutor; but I see I am to be turned forth into the darkness." He sighed elaborately and took out his pipe. "Dropping the pilot!—Bismarck and me. Alas!"

Vance had been smoking dreamily near the archway, apparently oblivious of Arnesson's complaining. Now he stepped into the room.

"Really, y' know, Markham, Mr. Arnesson is quite right. We agreed to keep him posted; and if he's to be of any help to us he must know all the facts."

"It was you yourself," protested Markham, "who pointed out the possible danger of mentioning last night's occurrence. . . ."

"True, but I had forgotten at the time our promise to Mr. Arnesson. And I'm sure his discretion can be relied on." Then Vance related in detail Mrs. Drukker's experience of the night before.

Arnesson listened with rapt attention. I noticed that his sardonic expression gradually disappeared, and that in its place came a look of calculating sombreness. He sat for several minutes in contemplative silence, his pipe in his hand.

"That's certainly a vital factor in the problem," he commented at length. "It changes our constant. I can see that this thing has got to be calculated from a new angle. The Bishop, it appears, is in our midst. But why should he come to haunt Lady Mae?"

"She is reported to have screamed at almost the exact moment of Robin's death."

"Aha!" Arnesson sat up. "I grasp your implication. She saw the Bishop from her window on the morning of Cock Robin's dissolution, and later he returned and perched on her doorknob as a warning for her to keep mum."

"Something like that, perhaps. . . Have you enough integers now to work out your formula?"

"I'd like to cast an eye on this black bishop. Where is it?"

Vance reached in his pocket and held out the chessman. Arnesson took it eagerly His eyes glittered for a moment. He turned the piece over in his hand, and then gave it back.

"You seem to recognize this particular bishop," said Vance dulcetly. "You're quite correct. It was borrowed from your chess set in the library."

Arnesson nodded a slow affirmative.

"I believe it was." Suddenly he turned to Markham and an ironic leer came over his lean features. "Was that why I was to be kept in the dark? Under suspicion am I? Shades of Pythagoras! What penalty attaches to the heinous crime of distributing chessmen among one's neighbors?"

Markham got up and walked toward the hall.

"You are not under suspicion, Arnesson," he answered, with no attempt to conceal his ill-humor. "The bishop was left at Mrs. Drukker's at exactly midnight."

"And I was half an hour too late to qualify. Sorry to have disappointed you."

"Let us hear if your formula works out," said Vance, as we passed out of the front doorb "We've a little visit to pay to Mr. Pardee now."

'Pardee? Oho! Calling in a chess expert on the subject of bishops, eh? I see your reasoning—it at least has the virtue of being simple and direct."

He stood on the little porch and watched us, like a japish gargoyle, as we crossed the street.

Pardee received us with his customary quiet courtesy. The tragic, frustrated look which was a part of his habitual expression was even more pronounced than usual; and when he drew up chairs for us in his study his manner was that of a man whose interest in life had died, and who was merely going through the mechanical motions of living.

"We have come here, Mr Pardee," Vance began, "to learn what we can of Sprigg's murder in Riverside Park yesterday morning. We have excellent reasons for every question we are about to ask you."

Pardee nodded resignedly.

"I shall not be offended at any line of interrogation you take. After reading the papers I realize just how unusual a problem you are facing."

"First, then, please inform us where you were yesterday morning between seven and eight."

A faint flush overspread Pardee's face, but he answered in a low, even voice:

"I was in bed. I did not rise until nearly nine."

"Is it not your habit to take a walk in the park before breakfast?" (I knew this was sheer guess-work on Vance's part, for the subject of Pardee's habits had not come up during the investigation.)

"That is quite true," the man replied, without a moment's hesitation. "But yesterday I did not go—I had worked rather late the night before."

"When did you first hear of Sprigg's death?"

"At breakfast. My cook repeated the gossip of the neighborhood. I read the official account of the tragedy in the early edition of the evening Sun."

"And you saw the reproduction of the Bishop note, of course, in this morning's paper. What is your opinion of the affair, Mr. Pardee?"

"I hardly know." For the first time his lack-lustre eyes showed signs of animation. "It's an incredible situation. The mathematical chances are utterly opposed to such a series of inter-related events being coincidental."

"Yes," Vance concurred. "And speaking of mathematics: are you at all familiar with the Riemann-Christoffel tensor?"

"I know of it," the man admitted. "Drukker uses it in his book of world lines. My mathematics, however, are not of the physicist's type. Had I not become enamored of chess"—he smiled sadly—"I would have been an astronomer. Next to manoeuvring the factors in a complicated chess combination, the greatest mental satisfaction one can get, I think, is plotting the heavens and discovering new planets. I even keep a five-inch equatorial telescope in a pent-house on my roof for amateur observations."

"You were, I understand, at the Dillards' last Thursday when Mr. Arnesson was discussing this tensor with Drukker and Sprigg."

"Yes, I recall that the subject came up then."

"How well did you know Sprigg?"

"Only casually. I had met him with Arnesson once or twice."

"Sprigg, also, it seems, was in the habit of walking in Riverside Park before breakfast," observed Vance negligently. "Ever run into him there, Mr. Pardee?"

The man's eyelids quivered slightly, and he hesitated before answering.

"Never," he said finally.

Vance appeared indifferent to the denial. He rose and, going to the front window, looked out.

"I thought one might be able to see into the archery range from here. But I note that the angle cuts off the view entirely."

"Yes, the range is quite private. There's even a vacant lot opposite the wall, so that no one can see over it. . . Were you thinking of a possible witness to Robin's death?"

"That, and other things." Vance returned to his chair. "You don't go in for archery, I take it."

"It's a trifle too strenuous for me. Miss Dillard once tried to interest me in the sport, but I was not a very promising acolyte. I've been to several tournaments with her, however."

(To be continued.)

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ISSUE No. 22—'31

SAVED IMPORTED DRESS

"After a little wearing, a lovely green voile—an imported dress—lost color so completely that it was not wearable. A friend who had admired it asked me why I wasn't wearing it any more. On hearing the reason, she advised dyeing it and recommended Diamond Dyes. To make a long story short, it turned out beautifully. I have a lovely new dress that really cost just 15c—the price of one package of Diamond Dyes.

"I have since used Diamond Dyes for both tinting and dyeing. They do either equally well. I am not an expert dyer but I never have a failure with Diamond Dyes. They seem to be made so they always go on smoothly and evenly. They never spot, streak or run; and friends never know the things I dye with Diamond Dyes are redyed at all!"

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Foundation Started By Canadian Authors

Toronto.—At a meeting here of representatives of Canadian letters and the drama, as well as the sister arts of music, painting and sculpture, the Canadian Authors' Foundation has been established.

The object is to provide a perpetual fund for the benefit of any man or woman of distinction in Canadian letters, or their dependents." This was the intention of a small group who originated the scheme, who sought to commemorate the debt Canadian letters owe to Dr. Charles G. D. Roberts, whose literary jubilee since he published "Orion" 50 years ago has just been celebrated.

The board of governors will consist of the presidents of the Royal Society of Canada, the Canadian Authors' Association, the National Council of Women, the Association of Canadian Clubs, the secretary, and also Sir Andrew MacPhail, Justice Edouard Fabre Surveyer, Duncan Campbell Scott, Dr. George Wrong and Judge Emily Murphy.

Methuselah

Methuselah ate what he found on his plate
And never, as people do now,
Did he note the amount of calorie count—
He ate because it was chow.
He wasn't disturbed as at dinner he sat
Destroying a roast or a pie.
To think it was lacking in lime or in fat
Or a couple of vitamins shy.
He cheerfully chewed every species of food,
Untroubled by worries or fears
Lest his health might be hurt by some fancy dessert,
And he lived over nine hundred years!

—Medical Sentinel.

Radios Aids Milk Production

Horton, Kan.—Radio has been pressed into service to increase the milk production of dairy cattle. A set, installed in the barns of Mrs. Mary Blakely, and played at milking time, resulted in such uniform contentment among the cows that the average milk production was two pounds greater per month than previously.

"Human beings are not often either very, very good or very, very bad."—Bebe Daniels.

The ADVENTURES of CAPTAIN JIMMY and his Dog SCOTTIE

What came before: As Captain Jimmy and his new found friend Jed Stone race away from the Chinese bandits in an old railway locomotive, Jed tells how his brother had been captured by outlaws, and of his vain search.

As Jed told me the story of how his brother had soundly thrashed the bandit chief and how they had carried him away into the hills in revenge, it suddenly occurred to me that these outlaws were the same band from which I had recently escaped.

We were so interested in our plans for getting him free, that I failed to notice another train rounding the curve until its whistle shrieked a warning. To make matters worse, we were backing up, instead of running forward and our string of freight cars would soon be reduced to matchwood between the heavy locomotives.

The brakes would never stop in time—I switched to full speed ahead, in hope that I could lessen the impact. The wheels spun and hissed, and it seemed that our locomotive must jump the track.

Too late! There was an ear-splitting crash and it just felt as if some big giant had kicked the locomotive right out from under us. It seemed as if she were going to turn right over, but somehow it held to the rails.

Looking back we saw a wreck indeed. The engine had plowed into the rear of our train of ten freight cars. The first three were a mass of splinters, the next two were cross ways on the track. The engine itself, after causing all that trouble had jumped the track, and now lay on its side in the ditch steaming and fussing at a great rate.

The tracks looked as if a cyclone had just passed by. Rails were torn up, and ties scattered around. The crew had luckily jumped, and taking no further chances, promptly fled.

"I guess we had better get out of here before someone blames us for all this", chuckled Je Stone. "First thing you'll know some one or other will want their old engine back"—let's go."

It seemed best to leave the freight cars right there. As quickly as I could, I uncoupled the engine, climbed into the cab and opened the throttle. After roaring along for a few miles an idea occurred to Jed Stone.

"How about cutting the telegraph wires?"

True enough, in a few minutes the crew might decide to return and telegraph ahead, and then there'll be a whole parcel of Chinese troops waiting for us, asking where we found the engine. We slowed down to a stop. In a moment I climbed out and cut the wires.

We were still in enemy territory, many, many, miles from Shanghai. Somehow we must get to our airplane and get going. Every moment's delay meant just that much less chance of rescuing Jed Stone's brother, Guy, alive. On and on I pushed the old engine, as fast as I dared.

The country was flat and uninteresting. Most of the timber had been cut away years before, and the ground almost barren of vegetation. Mile after mile passed by, and after a time we began to see an occasional soldier walking along the tracks. Then a large wood began to appear on our left, stretching away to the horizon.

(To be continued.)

Any of our young readers writing to "Capt. Jimmy", 2010 Star Bldg., will receive his signed photo free.

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Poland Is Land of Hospitality

After all, interesting as sightseeing and street-loitering are in Poland, my greatest joy was in knowing Poles. They are the most courteous people I've ever met, with the most beautiful manners. I don't mean that I noticed this among the aristocracy only; I don't mean that I myself met always with such politeness, from all classes of people. They're courteous to each other—the men take off their hats to other men, a woman shakes hands with a roomful of women guests at afternoon tea, a child of four or five speaks to all the children and all the nurses when he leaves a group in the park. And along with their courtesy they're hospitable to the nth degree. The slightest excuse and they invite you to dinner or tea, or to stay at their homes. I could have spent another fifteen months in Poland, if I'd accepted all my invitations. In one little town I expected to stay three or four hours, just between trains, but found my hostess had made plans for four days. When I spoke of leaving a country house on Thursday, the niece exclaimed, "Thursday! But you've just come! My aunt expects you to stay a fortnight, if not a month. I'm here for a month, and some of the guests for two." They've made hospitality a fine art; they thank you for coming till you half feel you're doing the favor instead of receiving it.

I think one reason they are model hosts is because Poles are modest. My introductions told, of course, something about me, but alas! they told me little or nothing about my hosts. Often and often I wished I didn't have to ask so many questions, that they'd voluntarily tell me more. Eight months after I'd been her guest, I happened to learn that my first hostess had been a pupil of Mme. Curie-Sklodowska in Paris, her most promising pupil, the discoverer of radium said; again that she'd done some notable work in mathematics; it was only because it came up in another connection that she casually referred to her translation of Shakespeare's sonnets (into Polish!). If you had such records and a foreign guest, would you keep absolutely still about your achievements?

Nor was she an exception to the rule. I arrived in Warsaw to find that a friend had arranged for me to live in a Polish household, Pani L.'s (Pani means Mrs. and Pan Mr. as nearly as I can put it in England.) I had a pleasant talk with her and answered her questions about my writing and my plans for Poland; of herself not a word. But when later in the day I gave this address at the bank and the American Embassy and to half a dozen persons, they asked, "Is it Suzanna L.? Are you living in the house of the Pani L., who writes poetry as well as novels?" And I was, though I had to ask her point-blank to confirm it.—Grace Humphrey, in "Poland the Unexplored."

Remember this—that there is a proper dignity and proportion to be observed in the performance of every act of life.—Marcus Aurelius.

"I spent a season in Hollywood and I didn't like any of the actresses enough to buy them a soda."—Joseph Hergesheimer.

"The trouble with most people is they treat sin as if it were a cream puff instead of a rattlesnake."—Billy Sunday.

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