

The Mazaroff Mystery

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W. N. U. Service

THE STORY

Mervyn Holt is engaged by a man calling himself Mazaroff as a traveling companion. After a short tour they put up at the Woodcock Inn on Marquand street. They meet, casually, Mrs. Elphinstone and Sheila Merchlison. Mazaroff tells Holt they are his wife and daughter and that his real name is Merchlison. That night Mazaroff fails to return to the inn and his disappearance is unexplained. Holt meets Sheila and tells her of Mazaroff's disappearance. Holt is questioned by Police Sergeant Manners and a reporter, Bowman. Mazaroff's murdered body is found. Crole, Mazaroff's lawyer, and Maythorne, private detective, arrive. Valuable diamonds that Mazaroff usually carried are missing. A gun, stolen from Musgrave, is found at the scene of the murder. Evidence at the inquest proves Mazaroff was Merchlison. His will leaves all to Holt. Herman Kloop, close friend of Mazaroff, is in London.

CHAPTER V

The Diamond World

We found Mr. Kloop at half past ten, leisurely finishing a late breakfast, a little, dapper, Hebraic looking gentleman.

He appeared to take unusual interest in me as we revealed our separate identities, and I remembered then that the details of Mazaroff's will had come out in Postlethwaite's evidence at the inquest, and that newspaper reporters had been present.

"I only arrived in London last night," he said, as we seated ourselves. "I read about Mazaroff in the paper. A strange affair, gentlemen—and yet not so strange as it seems. Mazaroff was a careless man. He was too ready—sheer thoughtlessness, you know—to let people see what he had on him. And he carried things that I should have kept under lock and key. However—tell me—how did you find out that I was here?"

"We found these letters of yours in Mazaroff's rooms at the Hotel Cecil," replied Maythorne, producing the letter case, "and judging from them that you were a very intimate friend of his, I cabled to your address in Cape Town yesterday morning, and received a reply at night that you were here. You have read up the case, Mr. Kloop?"

"All that there is in these papers," replied Kloop. "I see the police suspect some local man—a villager of no very good reputation. May be so—but I should say, knowing what I do of Mazaroff, that there is something deeper in the case than a mere vulgar murder and robbery. Now, as I learn from the newspaper accounts that Mr. Holt was Mazaroff's companion in his north-country excursion, and with him all the time at this Woodcock Inn, I should like to ask Mr. Holt to tell me two or three things—questions that occur to me, you know. Did you ever notice anything to make you think that you—that is to say, that Mazaroff was being followed—tracked?"

"I can't say that I ever did," said I. "You never, for instance, noticed a man, or men, who turned up with some regularity at the hotels you stayed at?" he suggested.

"Well," I answered. "I can only think of this—that seems to have anything to do with your suggestion. We stayed a night at Huntingdon—our first night. I saw Mazaroff talking, evidently confidentially, to a man in the smoking room late that night. Then, one day at York, I saw him in conversation with the same man in York station."

"You'd know the man again?" suggested Kloop.

"Oh, yes—a young, fair-haired, fresh-complexioned man, very smartly dressed," I said. "A man of probably twenty-five, or so."

"Were there any other guests than yourselves at this Woodcock Inn?" inquired Kloop.

"Staying there—no," I replied. "People came in, though, for lunch—people who were motoring north or south."

Kloop folded his hands on the table and looked from one to the other of us.

"What is in my mind," he said, "is that Mazaroff may have been tracked to this place, caught on that moor by the man who had tracked him, and done to death."

"For what he had on him?" suggested Crole.

"That—or something like it," answered Kloop. "I see it's stated in the papers—from Mr. Holt's evidence—that he probably had a lot of money, and his valuables on him. But—do you know if he had anything else—anything that would make a man resort to actual murder to gain possession of?"

"We don't," answered Maythorne. "The fact is, Mr. Kloop, we came to you hoping that you, as a close friend of his, could throw a lot of light on Mazaroff. What, now, was he likely to have on him?"

"I do not," replied Kloop. "But," he added, with a quiet smile, "I dare say he was. In fact, I should conclude he was the Andrew Merchlison spoken of at the inquest. He was a bit of a mystery man. But I never knew him as anything else than Salim Mazaroff, and he never said a word to me about his antecedents, during the whole time of our friendship."

"When he first became known to me, Mazaroff was what you might term a general trader, or general speculator in commerce. But of late years, he had given up all that and had turned his attention exclusively to diamonds. When he retired, and when he came to England he had a certain deal, or venture, or speculation on, and I am inclined to believe that it has more than a little to do with his murder."

"Last winter Mazaroff got hold of a truly magnificent blue diamond. I have seen the famous Blue Hope—Mazaroff's stone was finer, both in size and quality. It weighed fifty-five and a half carats: its color and brilliancy were superb! I don't think—indeed I am sure—it was not seen by anyone but myself in Cape Town; Mazaroff sent it off to England. He—"

"To whom?" interrupted Maythorne. "That I do not know," replied Kloop.

Maythorne produced the receipt for the registered letter posted at Cape Town and passed it over to him.

"Do you think that receipt has anything to do with the sending?" he asked. "Look at the indorsement on the back—in Mazaroff's writing."

"Kloop examined the bit of paper carefully, on both sides, and finally passed it back with a satisfied nod.

"Oh, no doubt!" he answered. "That would be about the date. Sent it to the London branch of his bank, to be sure. The indorsement proves it, too—what could be clearer? 'H. D. L.' 'Blue Diamond One,' of course."

"Why, 'Blue Diamond One'?" asked Maythorne. "Is there, or was there, a Blue Diamond Two?"

"Kloop smiled knowingly.

"Precisely what I am about to tell you!" he answered. "There was—in the end. And I feel convinced that Mazaroff had Blue Diamond Two, and perhaps Blue Diamond One, on him when he was murdered on the moor! After he got hold of that first blue diamond, he developed an almost feverish craze to get a second. I know that he got Blue Diamond One for what you call, I believe—in your English phrase—a mere song. But he was so intent on getting another blue diamond to match it that he told me he was prepared to go to a great length, a big price. In the end he got what he wanted."

"Another?" exclaimed Crole.

"Another. And equally fine," replied Kloop. "I don't know, for he wouldn't tell me, what he gave for it. But he got it—and not very long before he sailed for England."

"You saw it?" asked Maythorne.

"I saw it—yes," assented Kloop. "So—I have seen both. I don't think anybody else has. Unless—which I suspect—Mazaroff has shown them here, since his coming. He had his eye on buyers in Europe."

"Did he mention any particular buyers?" inquired Maythorne.

"He did not. But he did tell me that he had a man here, in London, who did things for him, and who was in touch with European and American people of high degree that might be inclined to give a very fancy price for the pair."

"And you feel sure that he first sent Blue Diamond One to London, and then brought Blue Diamond Two in his own pocket?" suggested Maythorne.

"I feel sure of that," said Kloop. "I may say—I'm certain of it. And since I have learnt these particulars of his sad fate, I have wondered if Mazaroff did one of two things, or, perhaps, both? The first—did he get talkative on board ship, and show his second blue diamond to fellow passengers; the second, did he show it here in London, amongst the fraternity?"

"The fraternity?" said Crole. "You mean—"

"I mean Hatton Garden," answered Kloop, with a knowing smile. "Where, as you must know, the greater part of the diamond transactions of this country are carried out. It will surprise me if Mazaroff is not to be heard of there! Come, gentlemen, I will walk along the street with you . . . and we will see!"

We made a little procession along Holborn; Mr. Kloop and Maythorne in front, Mr. Crole and myself in the rear.

Kloop greeted a man whose fine cloth overcoat was ornamented by a luxurious fur collar and his black satin stock by a blazing diamond pin. They were evidently well acquainted and met with much enthusiasm and handshaking—after which Kloop drew his man aside. When, a few minutes later, they parted, Kloop came to us, shaking his head.

with those stones—did not intend them to come on the market. This is the market!—and that man knows nothing. But there are still other men."

After that he dived into several offices, and spoke to other men whom he met on the street, but we got no news of Mazaroff.

"The fact is evident," Kloop said, as we once more sought the open street. "Mazaroff has not visited these regions during his stay in London. I am convinced now that if he showed his blue diamonds here it was in private."

Then, saying that he must now attend to his own business, Kloop left us. We three went to lunch.

"Well, we've got some information," observed Maythorne as we settled down at a corner table. "We've found out about those diamonds. I figure up the situation in this way: Mazaroff sent the first—Blue Diamond One, as



"Were There Any Other Guests Than Yourself at This Woodcock Inn?" Inquired Kloop.

"well call it—to his London bankers. Now then—did he send it for safety, until his coming, or did he send it that it might be shown to a likely customer? I think, to a likely customer—I also think more, in view of that cipher letter. I think that—probably for some time—Armintrude, then at the Imperial Banking Corporation of South Africa in London, had not only had charge of Mazaroff's correspondence with the bank, but had corresponded privately with Mazaroff. I think that Armintrude took charge of Blue Diamond One till Mazaroff's arrival with Blue Diamond Two, and, probably, during the interval made inquiries for a likely buyer of the pair.

"From all I hear of him, Mazaroff was an astute man. He probably figured that there was a lot of men here in England who, rightly or wrongly, have made vast fortunes out of the war. Such men—as we well know—want to set up in great style, or, rather, they do set up in great style. And the men have women—there's Lady Midas as well as Sir Gorgons. Now what does Lady Midas want—diamonds! What is a fashionable woman without diamonds? Her hair may be false, and her skin as yellow as parchment—but she's going to have diamonds glittering in one and on the other. Now I reckon that Mazaroff knew all that, and that he considered Lady Midas the customer he was looking for, eh?"

"Well—no doubt you're not far wrong," laughed Crole. "Now, if you've got Lady Midas' address in your pocket?"

"At present," observed Maythorne,

Many Republics Before That of United States

Probably the first government which can be considered republican in form was the ancient Israelitish commonwealth or republic, which lasted from about 1491 B. C. to 1065 B. C. About three centuries after this the Greek states, of which Athens was chief, set up what gradually came to be democratic republics. Ancient Carthage and Rome were for a short period republics. During the Middle Ages many of the free cities of Italy and Germany set up republics. San Marino in Italy is now the oldest existing republic, while Switzerland has existed as a republic since 1291. According to an article in the American Cyclopaedia, the degree of popular sovereignty in republics has varied very widely in the past, most of the so-called republics having been ruled by

Moral Conveyed by Winter
The simplicity of winter has a deep moral. The return of nature, after such a career of splendor and profitability, to habits so simple and austere, is not lost upon either the head or the heart.—Burroughs, in "Touches of Nature."

"Lady Midas is found at a lot of addresses. In the meantime, there's spade work to be done in another corner."

"It strikes me there are several corners," said Crole. "Up to now, we've had no light on that Mombasa affair. There can be no doubt that Merchlison was on that ship, that he slipped away from it, leaving his things behind, and got safely ashore—to disappear as Merchlison and reappear as Mazaroff. Now, why?"

"I should say—because he wanted to cut clear of Mrs. Merchlison, left at home," said Maythorne, dryly. "He wanted her to think him dead!—what did it matter as long as he was alive? But I tell you he was always a bit of a mystery man, and I'd give a lot to know where he went, and with whom he talked, and so on, that day after he and Holt struck the Woodcock. He saw somebody that day who gave him some information about Mrs. Elphinstone and Miss Merchlison—he said as much to you, didn't he?"

"He did," I admitted.

"Well—who was that somebody?" he asked. "That somebody who's never come forward?"

Maythorne laid down his knife and fork, and bent across the table to us. "Suppose," he said, in a whisper, meant to be mysterious and significant, "suppose—eh?—suppose it was his wife?"

This suggestion seemed to impress Crole even more than it impressed me—his mouth opened and he started. But before he could say anything, a young man came threading his way through the crowded room and made for him. He bent down, handed Crole a card, and whispered something. Crole looked at the card and towards the door. "Outside!—waiting!" he said. "Bring him in here, Rollinson."

Rollinson—one of Crole's clerks—went off, and Crole threw the card on the table for us to look at. It was a very neat, beautifully engraved card, giving the name and address of Mr. Adolf Frobenius, 508 Bond street, W., and a very neat, spick-and-span gentleman followed it.

"Swell jewellers in Bond street," whispered Crole, as Mr. Frobenius, ushered by the clerk, made his way to our corner; "client of mine, and neighbor of mine, too—lives near me at Wimbledon; smart man. Hallo, Frobenius!" he continued as he greeted his visitor. "Delighted you ran me to earth. Let me introduce my friends—Mr. Maythorne; Mr. Mervyn Holt. I dare say," he added, with a shy smile, "you've heard of both, before now."

"Of Mr. Maythorne, often," answered the jeweller, with a polite bow. "And of Mr. Holt—since I read in the newspapers of the Mazaroff affair. Which affair, Mr. Crole," he continued, seating himself by the solicitor, "is what I have come to see you about."

"I thought so," said Crole. "Guessed it at once. We shall be glad of any information. Did you know Mazaroff?"

"I have read a great deal in the newspapers about this affair. And I came along to see you, Mr. Crole, because I am almost sure that not very long ago, under rather unusual circumstances, I met Mr. Mazaroff."

"Good!" exclaimed Crole. "But—you either did or you didn't. Why 'almost'?"

"Because," answered Frobenius, "the man whom I met was not introduced to me by any name. I just met him. However, he was a notable man—and the description of Mazaroff in the papers corresponds with my recollections. But I will give you the facts. During the past twelve months or so, I have had business dealings with a Sir Samuel and Lady Locke. Sir Samuel is a self-made man; to be plain, he made a vast fortune as a contractor during the recent war; he is, I gather, a multi-millionaire. About a year ago he bought Lord Mulworth's house in Park lane. He and Lady Locke—chiefly her ladyship—have had extensive dealings with me in jewelry and plate. Lady Locke has bought a good many jewels from me."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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Fills Intermission

An intermezzo is a song or chorus or a short burlesque, ballet, operetta or the like given between the acts of a play or opera.

Feet of Clay

We consecrate a great deal of our sense because it was allowed by great men. There is none without his folly.—Emerson.

All must be earnest in a world like ours.—Horatius Bonar.

The wise too jealous are; fools too secure.—Congreve.

Old bachelors are women's rights and widowers are women's lefts.

The world's an inn and death the journey end.—Dryden.

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Trees Given Odd Shape

In ancient days when wandering tribes of Indians made their way from Indiana north to the hunting grounds of Michigan it was their habit, when forming new trails, to bend and tie the twigs along the line of march in such a manner that as they grew they retained the shape in which they were trained by the savages. There are many of these trail markers in western Michigan marking the trails of the Pottawatomies and other tribes that migrated back and forth before the day of the white man. They still live and are mighty oaks and maples. Despite their crook there is usually a good sawlog in the straight part above the bend. But they are treasured as historic monuments, reminders of the trail blazers who did not have axes or did not care to mutilate the tree by cutting.

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The Funny Mortal

Funny mortal! He lives in a town where it is commercial suicide to offend the Local Big Guy, and yet feels superior to the big man on the farm.—Los Angeles Times.

Wisdom is only found in truth.—Goethe.

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