

The Mazaroff Mystery

—By—
J. S. FLETCHER

Illustrations by IRWIN MYERS
(©. by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.)
W. N. U. Service

CHAPTER VII—Continued

"You think that, Maythorne?" I asked as we peered at the door of the elevator.

"Of course!" he exclaimed. "Doesn't need half an eye nor an ounce of brain to be dead certain of that! She knows—knows! And, as I said in there—who is it? Here's one thing certain, Holt—if she won't speak, I'll have to tell the police. But between now and tomorrow she'll have time to reflect. And in the meantime—"

He broke off abruptly. We went down and into the street, and in silence walked quickly down Edgware road. I knew what he was after—Cottlingey. And Cottlingey suddenly appeared before us in Praed street, as if he had shot out of the earth.

"He's come!" said Cottlingey. "Alone. They're both in the house, now. All's arranged." Maythorne nodded; they whispered together a moment; then Maythorne and I turned away.

"Did he mean that Eccleshare had come?" I asked. "And that—they'll watch him?"

"Eccleshare, of course," answered Maythorne. "Who else? Watch him?—Aye, they'll watch him—they'll watch both of 'em!"

I went back to my rooms thoroughly muddled in mind by the day's events. It seemed hopeless to try to piece them together, and yet I could scarcely refrain from the attempt. And underneath everything lay an uncomfortable suspicion, which forced itself upon me however much I fought against it—was Mrs. Elphinstone an accessory to Mazaroff's murder, and if so, after or . . . before? Out of all speculations one clear fact emerged—she had come into possession of that will, which, without doubt, was in Mazaroff's pocket when his murderer shot him.

All this was still seething in my mind when I met Maythorne next morning, at Crole's office. We were shown into Crole's private room at once; there, by Crole's desk, sat Mr. Herman Kloop. He gave us a knowing look as we walked in, and Crole nodded at him, as much as to say that whatever was to be said first was to come from the diamond merchant.

"News!" remarked Crole, laconically. "Another development!"

We sat down and turned on Kloop. "I came round to Mr. Crole as soon as I had breakfast—to tell him," he said. "Now I tell you. It is what I learned last night—late. From some of my friends in our trade. Mazaroff's pair of blue diamonds have been sold! They have been sold to a syndicate of three well-known dealers. A fancy price, too!" he added, with a chuckle.

"What price?" asked Maythorne. "It is said—and I dare say it's quite correct—two hundred thousand pounds," Kloop replied. "Of course—they're worth that—and more. Sufficiently more to give the buyers a nice big profit—when they sell. As—equally of course—they will."

"Well?" Maythorne asked. "But—who sold?"

Kloop laughed, glancing at Crole. "To be sure!" he replied. "A pertinent question! Armintrade sold. No concealment about that. Armintrade—the bank man."

"Armintrade only returned from the north last night," said Maythorne. "Where and how was this deal carried out?"

"Yes," answered Kloop. "I can tell something of that, but not precise details. I should say—by correspondence."

Maythorne looked at Crole: Crole shook his head.

"What concerns us," he remarked, "is the fact that Armintrade sold these things—Mazaroff's property. We know that Armintrade was in possession of what we'll call Blue Diamond Number One, and we also know that Mazaroff had Blue Diamond Number Two on him when he went north. So—Mazaroff must have met Armintrade and handed over to him the second diamond. They must have met—unknown to anyone—at Marrsdale."

Maythorne turned to Kloop. "Armintrade's name was openly, freely mentioned to you in connection with this?" he asked. "Was Mazaroff's name mentioned?"

"Oh, to be sure! As the source from which the diamonds came." Maythorne got up from his chair and began to button his overcoat. "There's only one thing to be done," he said, glancing at Crole. "You and I and Holt must see Armintrade at once. We want an explanation. As far as I'm aware, those diamonds, since the moment of Mazaroff's death, have been the property of Mr. Holt here. Isn't that so, Crole?"

thinking hard. He looked up at last. "It seems pretty clear—now!—that Mazaroff wasn't murdered for the sake of those diamonds," he muttered, as if somewhat dissatisfied at the new turn of affairs. "In that case—what was he murdered for?—what was the motive?"

"He'd other valuable property on him, you know," observed Crole. "And there are other people to question when we've done with Armintrade. Eccleshare, for instance, and that man Parslave."

"We entered Courthope's bank together and sent in our cards to Armintrade. He took small notice of Maythorne and myself; his attention gave itself to the solicitor."

"Well, Mr. Crole?" he began. "What can I do for you?"

"You can give us some much-needed information, Mr. Armintrade," replied Crole, promptly. "You are aware, of course, that, having acted as the late Mr. Mazaroff's solicitor here in London, I have employed Mr. Maythorne to inquire into the mystery of his murder. Now, we have ascertained from Mr. Herman Kloop of Cape Town, a close personal friend of Mazaroff's, now in London, that Mazaroff possessed two extremely valuable dia-

monds, one of which was in his possession when he went north, to Marrsdale, and the other of which had been in your keeping, as Mazaroff's agent, for some months. Kloop tells us that you have sold these two diamonds to a syndicate for two hundred thousand pounds. Is that correct?"

Armintrade, whose smile, sardonic and inscrutable, had never left his eyes, nodded. "Quite correct!" he answered.

"Do you mind telling us all about it?" Crole asked. "I gather the whole thing is plain enough—when explained."

"Plain as a pikestaff," replied Armintrade, with a laugh. "I have acted as agent or intermediary, or whatever you like to call it, for Mazaroff for some time. Well, now, as regards these blue diamonds—great rarities. I have had the first in my hands for some time. The second he handed to me personally at Marrsdale the day after he arrived at the Woodcock."

"Ah!—you met him there?"

"Certainly I met him there!"

"We discussed the sale of the diamonds, and came to an arrangement."

"May I ask what it was?"

"Certainly! He gave me an option on them."

"Ah! I see! An option? Just so. You were to have them at a price?"

"Of course. But I'll show you the terms, in Mazaroff's handwriting. He had brought me this, already written and signed—there you are!"

He produced a sheet of letter paper and handed it to Crole, who took and read it attentively. "I see!" he said, handing it back. "He gave you the option for one month of buying the diamonds for a hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds. And—you have taken it up. Then—what about the option money? Which, of course, should and would have been paid to Mazaroff?"

"Exactly! The money is at the disposal of the late Saim Mazaroff's rightful heir or heirs, beneficiaries, residuary legatees, or whoever has a proper and legal right to it."

Crole pointed to me. "Mr. Holt there is Mazaroff's residuary legatee," he said. "He comes in for—everything!"

Armintrade laughed, and gave me a shy smile.

"Lucky for Mr. Holt!" he remarked. "But—are you sure of that? I understand that the will made at York is lost?"

"The will is here!" said Crole, holding up his envelope. "You can see it and read it."

It," answered Crole, promptly. "It won't be contested, either. Everything that Mazaroff died possessed of belongs to Mr. Mervyn Holt. So—"

"So I owe Mr. Holt one hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds," said Armintrade with a laugh. "Very good!—shall I send the check and the papers along to you, Mr. Crole? Just so—it shall be done at once. Glad you've found the will."

We all rose. For the first time Maythorne spoke—addressing Armintrade.

"You didn't think it necessary to give evidence at the inquest?" he suggested.

"What evidence had I to give?" asked Armintrade. "My affairs with Mazaroff had nothing to do with his murder."

"Have you any theory, yourself, about his murder?" continued Maythorne.

"I have had two. One was that he may have been followed from London by somebody who knew that he had the second blue diamond on him—he was a very careless, thoughtless man!—the other that it was just a common, vulgar murder for the sake of robbery by one or other of those men whom he had been treating at the Woodcock. For instance, where is that man who disappeared—Parslave? So far, I believe, the police have failed to track him. Possibly he murdered Mazaroff, robbed the body and cleared out. Anyhow—he's vanished."

CHAPTER VIII

Fresh Links

We took our departure—silently and unceremoniously, as if we had been very ordinary customers, doing very ordinary business. But outside, in Mincing lane, Maythorne halted, and looked questioningly at Crole.

"Satisfied?" he asked.

"As far as that goes—yes," replied Crole. "There's no doubt about the option—that's clear enough. No getting past Mazaroff's own handwriting and own terms!"

"Very well—if you're satisfied," said Maythorne. He moved forward a few yards and against stopped. "I wish we knew a bit more about Mazaroff's movements on the day following his arrival at the Woodcock," he muttered. "It's all vague, shadowy, uncertain—and yet bits keep coming out. Well—the next job is Eccleshare and Parslave. If we can't get some light through those two . . ."

He paused, looking round for a taxicab; as he signaled to one a little distance away, Crole spoke.

"My impression is that Eccleshare will have as straight a tale to tell us as we've heard from Armintrade," he exclaimed. "We're off the track, Maythorne!—or, rather, we've never been on it. I've got an intuition that neither Armintrade, nor Eccleshare, nor Parslave know anything about nor have anything whatever to do with Mazaroff's murder."

"All the same, we're going to have things out with Eccleshare and Parslave," answered Maythorne. "We may get a hint; a bit of a clew; anything. Perhaps," he added, as we settled ourselves in the cab, "perhaps I've got a pretty good idea of how things are, myself, Crole—but I want all the contributory information I can get. And I want to know why Parslave has been lying safely hidden in Doctor Eccleshare's house in London ever since this affair happened."

At Maythorne's bidding we got out at the corner of Conduit street and walked along to his office. Outside his door stood a fine, obviously brand-new Rolls-Royce car. Crole smiled at the sight of it.

"One of your aristocratic clients, eh, Maythorne?" he observed challengingly. "A duke or a duchess at least—what?"

"On the contrary, if you want to know," answered Maythorne, who had given car and chauffeur a sharp glance, "that's Sir Samuel Loek's car—or one of 'em—and his livery. And

I've a pretty good idea as to whom we shall find upstairs."

"Who?" asked Crole. "Lady Loek?"

"No—but her nephew, Mallison," retorted Maythorne. "A thousand to one on it! Come in!"

We went upstairs. One of the girl clerks came forward as we entered the outer office.

"Mr. Mallison—waiting to see you, sir," she said.

We went forward to Maythorne's private room. There stood, examining a picture, the young man whom I had seen Mazaroff talking to at Huntingdon and at York. He turned sharply as we walked in, and a flicker of his quick eyes showed that he recognized me. He instantly picked out Maythorne. "Oh—er—just dropped in to see you, don't you know—this Mazaroff affair. Queer business, ain't it?"

"What do you know about it, Mr. Mallison?" asked Maythorne. "We're anxious to get any information we can. And if you can tell us anything—"

Mallison sought inspiration in his cigarette.

"Oh, well, I—I scarcely know anything at all!" he said. "Of course, I met Mazaroff in Park lane, and I saw one of the blue diamonds, and heard about the pair of 'em—the other was in the hands of a chap named Armintrade—not Armstrong, though—a banking man. And between you and me, Lady Loek was jolly keen about getting hold of the pair, though she didn't say much about it just at the time. But I know, she was all for Sir Samuel buying 'em there and then. That's what I gave Mazaroff the tip about when I met him as I was going north."

"I see!" said Maythorne. "You were both going north about the same time, eh? To be sure. And what were you going north for?"

"Inspect some shootings," answered Mallison, promptly. "Looked over a lot while I was up there—both sides the Tweed."

"Capital idea!" agreed Maythorne. "And you met Mazaroff—accidentally? At Huntingdon, first; then at York. Exactly. But—did you ever meet him again?"

"Oh, yes," replied Mallison. "I met him at Gilchester."

"At Gilchester, eh? That's the market town for Marrsdale—a few miles from the Woodcock. How did you come to meet him there?"

"Accident! I'd motored over from Jedburgh to look at a shooting near Gilchester. I went into the hotel there to get some lunch, and stopped a bit afterward. Mazaroff came in—we had a drink or two together."

"You met Mazaroff at Gilchester. Did you talk about the diamonds again?"

"Of course! He told me what he'd done. He said he'd seen this agent of his—Armintrade—"

"The man's name is Armintrade." "That's it—Armintrade. He said he'd just seen Armintrade, who was shooting in the neighborhood, and they'd come to an agreement. Mazaroff had given Armintrade an option—for a hundred and seventy-five thousand. He believed Armintrade would take it up. But, if he didn't, then, Mazaroff said, Lady Loek should have the pair at the price first named—a hundred and sixty thousand."

"That corroborates Armintrade," remarked Maythorne in an aside to Crole and myself. "Well," he went on, turning again to his caller. "I'm much obliged to you for calling."

"That's all right," replied Mallison, artlessly. "Thought I'd just drop in, you know—always glad to be of help."

He went away presently, and the three of us looked at each other. Crole spoke first.

"As you said just now, Maythorne, that corroborates Armintrade," he remarked. "And I'm beginning to think that this is a simple case of murder for the sake of robbery."

"That's no new theory," observed Maythorne. "It's the original one—but it may have all manner of variations. Well, now—Eccleshare and Parslave! That's the next—"



CATS' CHATTER

"What are they running about in that wild fashion for, do you know?" asked Miss Gray Cat as she watched some people on a tennis court.

"They call that a game of tennis," said Mrs. Black Cat. "There have been times when I have entered into that game."

"Yes, once in awhile, I will admit that I have liked the game of tennis." "Can you use one of those funny bats?" asked Miss Gray.

"Of course not, my dear, I can't use one of those rackets, as they are called, but I can chase a ball, you know, and catch it."

"Sometimes I go near the net and make a fine jump for the ball." "Where did you learn the game?" asked Miss Gray.

"It is natural for me to play with balls, and sometimes to catch them," said Mrs. Black.

"To get them between my paws and have a little game all by myself is something I like."

"Ah, yes, when I would get hold of a ball I'd have my own little game of tennis."

"I wouldn't pay any attention to the regular rules of tennis, which, to be frank with you, I never knew."

"And I don't suppose I ever will, for I really don't want to learn them."

"Then I don't suppose you will," said Miss Gray. "It's not a cat's nature to do something she doesn't want to do, unless sometimes when we run out of some one's way who doesn't want us around."

"Just the way it was. I didn't have to learn tennis, and so I didn't want to learn tennis, and so I didn't learn tennis," said Mrs. Black.

"I played it the way I wanted to, but I'll tell you a great secret."

"What, purr, purr, what is the secret? Do tell it to me. I love secrets," said Miss Gray.

"This is a fine one, too," said Mrs. Black. "Then don't keep me waiting for it," begged Miss Gray.

"Although I didn't know any of the rules of the game of tennis, they were always afraid of me, those players."

"Many and many has been the time when they've been afraid I would win everything."

"Then they have offered me milk at the back of the house to get me away from the tennis court."

"Isn't that a fine secret—to think that they had to offer me milk to get me out of the way?"

"Yes," said Miss Gray, "but perhaps they were afraid you would take away their balls so they couldn't play at all. Do you think they were afraid of your winning the game? Are you sure that was the secret reason why they offered you the milk?"

"Quite sure of it," snarled Mrs. Black.

"Well, you're not playing today, are you?" asked Miss Gray.

Always Better to Plug

With Brain Than Body

"We hear a great deal about the success that comes from plugging and plugging," said Charles M. Schwab. "I do not deny that this is so, but on the other hand, the man who plugs with his brain instead of his body is bound to go the farthest."

"A wealthy friend of mine had been forever bragging about his son who had gone into the family factory and worked eight hours a day as a mechanic. Both feet on the ground, you know," boasted the proud parent. So when I met the lad, I said:

"So you're the young man with both feet on the ground. What do you do for a living? To which he replied:

"I take orders from a man with both feet on a desk."

Unwarranted Criticism

Dr. Isadore Falk of the University of Chicago, who has discovered the influenza germ, said at a dinner party:

"America carries on more research, disinterested and unselfish, than any other country in the world, yet we are continually being abused for our materialism."

"Yes, Europe is continually declaring that our American philosophy is summed up in the law:

"Don't get gapin' around wonderin' why a black hen lays a white egg. Git the egg."—Springfield Union.

Early Aquatic Sports

In 1715 an Englishman named Thomas Doggett instituted boat races among the fishermen on the Thames. The first English regatta of which we have evidence took place on the Thames off Raleigh gardens in 1775. This was modeled on the Venetian regatta. The first race in the United States occurred in 1811 between two barges, the Knickerbocker of New York and the Invincible of Long Island, the former being the winner.

Fight That Made History

There were 130 Spanish vessels in the Spanish armada that undertook the invasion of England under Queen Elizabeth. The English had 197 boats that took part during the battle. However, many were small boats of little use. The fighting was done almost entirely by the large boats on both sides.

Artist of High Rank

Winslow Homer was the first to be generally acclaimed the first outstanding marine painter in this country and many critics regard him as the best of the American marine painters.

Cruden's Great Work

Alexander Cruden published his Biblical Concordance in 1737.

Another trouble with most husbands

is that they are too much like husbands and not enough like lovers.

ONE PRESCRIPTION MADE FAMILY DOCTOR FAMOUS



Seldom has any single act been of greater benefit to mankind than that of Dr. Caldwell in 1885, when he wrote the prescription which has carried his fame to the four corners of the earth.

Over and over, Dr. Caldwell wrote the prescription as he found men, women and children suffering from those common symptoms of constipation, such as coated tongue, bad breath, headache, gas, nausea, biliousness, no energy, lack of appetite, and similar things.

Demand for this prescription grew so fast, because of the pleasant, quick way it relieved such symptoms of constipation, that by 1888 Dr. Caldwell was forced to have it put up ready for use. Today, Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin, as it is called, is always ready at any drugstore.

Little Black Baby

An ebony infant sitting proudly in the scale—a familiar welfare center scene the world over—is the decoration on a recently issued Belgian Congo postage stamp. King Baby thus usurps the place usually occupied by the political ruler of a country. The stamp is sold for ten centimes, its postal value being five centimes, the extra cost being a voluntary contribution to work of the Belgian government or the decrease of infant mortality in the Congo.

Take NATURE'S REMEDY—NR—tonight. You'll be "fit and fine" by morning—tongue clear, headache gone, appetite back, bowels acting pleasantly, bilious attack forgotten. For constipation, too, Better than any mere laxative. At drugstore—only 25c. Make the test tonight. FEEL LIKE A MILLION, TAKE NR TO-NIGHT TOMORROW ALRIGHT.

W. N. U., Portland, No. 26-1930.

Immense Slice of Earth

Europe and Africa could both be placed within the boundaries of Asia, with about 2,000,000 square miles to spare.

Honey Production

The average production of a colony of bees is about 50 pounds, but under favorable conditions 100 pounds might be produced.

Keep Insects Away Outdoors!



Felt contains a special insect repellent. Spray clean smelling FELT. The World's Largest Selling Insect Killer. Killers of Fleas, Mosquitoes, Noths, Bed Bugs, Roaches, Ants, etc. because it's stainless and KILLS QUICKER.

Relativity

Professor Einstein is said to have hired a secretary to give the following explanation of relativity to his visitors: "When a pretty girl sits on your lap for an hour, it seems like a minute. When you sit on a hot stove for a minute it seems like an hour."—American Magazine.

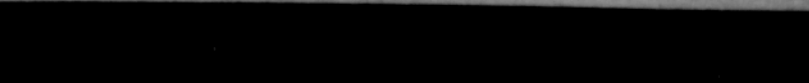
World War Relic

A cross of wood, which stood at Rochincoeur cemetery, France, to the memory of British soldiers who fell at the battle of Oppy Wood in 1917, has just been added to the interior decorations of St. Andrew's church, Stockwell, England.

After marriage, many an old-fashioned girl paints to please her husband.

In looking backward a man sees only the bright spots in the past.

Enjoy the charm of a Healthy Skin use



CLEANSING ANTISEPTIC SOOTHING. Soap, Ointment, and Cream. Prepared by Cuticura Corporation, Malden, Mass.