

## *A Wife's Crime*

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A Mexican Murder Which for a Time  
Defied Solution

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The Attempt to Fasten the Crime on Another  
Foiled by a Detective

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St. Louis, January 21.— Don Pedro Canosa was a wealthy banker residing near Fort Tunas, Mexico, and beloved by all who knew him. On the morning of July the 18<sup>th</sup>, 1881, the police authorities were informed that the banker was dead—had been murdered the night before while he slept. Juan Marajuez, one of the shrewdest detectives of the day, was entrusted with the case, and instructed to leave no stone unturned until the murderer had been secured. Arriving at the mansion of the murdered merchant, the officer found that the deed, to a great extent, was shrouded in mystery. The murdered man lay with a calm expression on his face, and it was evident that he had passed quietly and quickly from the sleep of life into the long, unbroken rest of death. In his left breast, directly over the organ of life, was still sticking the instrument of destruction which had sent his soul unsummoned to its author. The detective drew the tiny dagger from the wound and, wrapping it in some paper, placed it in his pocket. Scarcely an hour had passed when a carriage drove up to the door and the widow of a few hours, who had been on a visit to some relations, entered the room and threw herself, with a piercing cry, upon the corpse of her husband. Señora was dashingy beautiful, and might have felt the warmth of twenty-three summers. Her height was medium, her eyes clear, dark and restless, and glossy curls fell majestically over her rounded shoulders.

Her agonizing shrieks were painful to hear, and fearing that her reason might be impaired, her friends carried her to her room, where she continued to rave in a distressing manner. The inquest furnished no clue to the mystery save that when the widow was asked if she knew of any one having any hatred against her murdered husband; she answered somewhat tremulously that she did not. The usual verdict was given, and the señora was carried to her room in an insensible condition. Don Pedro was buried, and the matter gradually faded from the minds of the public, like others of a similar nature. Some days after the burial the detective called upon Señora Canosa, who kindly received him and ushered him into a richly-furnished parlor, where they conversed for a time on the murder.

“Señora,” said the detective, "do you suspect any one in particular of the murder of your husband?"

“I do not,” she hesitatingly replied, “but his base conduct to Señorita Miguel before his marriage with me was such as to force her to commit anything for revenge. Before I became his wife he seduced the girl under a promise of marriage, and then deserted her. Of late she has been leading a life of sin. She has been heard to utter threats of vengeance against him, and he always feared she would put them into execution.”

“Do you know anything about this dagger?” said the detective, drawing the instrument from his pocket.

The woman paled and shuddered at the sight of the blood-stained steel.

“I have heard of it,” she answered. “It belongs to Señorita Miguel, as the description given me of one she had in her possession answers to this completely.”

Thanking the widow for her information, the detective took his departure, not, however, until requested to deal leniently with the girl, as she was more sinned against than sinning.

The next day the detective rang the bell of the house in which Señorita Miguel resided and was immediately ushered into her room. Senorita entered in a few moments, and coming at once to the nature of his errand, the detective immediately began to discuss the tragedy. At the mention of the facts the woman began to weep. When she had dried her tears she told her story, and in such a straightforward manner as to leave no trace of suspicion whatever in the mind of her listener.

“He wronged me and made me an outcast from home,” she continued. “I did at one time determine to kill him, but I changed my mind and decided to let God mete out to him what he deserved.”

“You said you brought from home a dagger. Will you let me see it?”

She rose and went to a bureau, and after searching it for a time, said in a choking voice:

“It has disappeared, O cruel fate!”

“Is this it?” said the detective, drawing forth the tiny dagger.

“Yes—oh—yes!” she cried, and as she grasped it and saw the blood stained marks on it she sank back speechless.

“Señorita,” said the detective, “fear not, I believe your story; and, further, that the dagger was stolen from your drawer, that the deed might be fastened on you. I will extricate you and bring the real murderer to justice.”

For seven long months Marquez shadowed the murdered man’s widow with an astuteness that was highly commendable. One night he saw her leave her house, walk some distance, enter a cab and drive in the direction of the quay. He followed. Upon alighting she was immediately joined by a man whom the detective recognized as a noted gambler named Antonio Pablo, and the two walked arm in arm along the promenade for some time. Such words as “dagger,” and “no suspicion,” were heard by the detective, and, though disconnected, they added links to the chain. After a lengthy talk they

affectionately kissed each other and parted in different directions. Following the man, the detective saw him enter a house, and before he had secured the door the officer was in the hallway. Noiselessly following his man along the corridor, he saw him enter a room and close the door. Looking through the key-hole, he saw the occupant perusing a number of letters. Having finished he locked them in a trunk and placed the keys in his pillow, Satisfied that the man was asleep, he entered the room, secured the letters, and was just leaving, when he heard the sleeper mutter:

“Ah! Sweet one, your aim was sure. We are safe from detection.”

Each letter contained damning evidence of the guilt of Señora Canosa. In one she said: “It was done for my dear Antonio;” and in another, “I will destroy the sheath tomorrow.” This last letter was written on the same day that the detective found the letters. With the sheath in his possession the detective argued that the chain would be finished. The following morning the detective called upon the widow and was graciously received. Suddenly turning from the topic of conversation, the detective said gravely:

“Señora, do you know Antonio Pablo?”

The woman grew ashy pale, and, grasping the arm of her chair, looked the detective full in the face while she answered:

“No!”

“Who did you meet on the quay last night?”

“I object to this intrusion,” said the woman.

“Your objections will amount to nothing,” said the officer.

“Do you recognize these letters?” said the detective, at the same time throwing the package upon the table.

As she staggered to the table, the sheath dropped from her bosom to the floor.

“These letters are not mine,” she said.

“They were found in Antonio Pablo’s room,” said the detective. “And, by the way, this dagger fits this sheath,” and stooping, he seized the sheath and thrust the dagger into it.

A wild shriek parted her lips, and she sank to the floor.

“Oh, my God!” she cried, “is this the reward of my accursed schemes?”

Her agony was fearful, and while she shrieked for mercy an officer entered the room having Pablo in custody. They were conveyed to jail, and pending their trial they made a full confession.

Señora, on the night of the murder, secretly left the house of her relative and stole to the room of her husband and killed him while he slept. Antonio stole the dagger from the room of Señorita Miguel. Thus did they endeavor to fasten the guilt on the unfortunate young girl. Both were sentenced to imprisonment for life. One morning the jailer found Señora dead in her cell, having cut an artery the night before and bled to death. Señor Canosa had, a few months before his death, made a will in which he bequeathed a large bulk of his estate to his victim, Señorita Miguel.

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