

Erle Stanley Gardner

SEVEN COMPLETE
PERRY MASON NOVELS

THE CASE OF:

The Foot-Loose Doll

**The Glamorous
Ghost**

**The Long-Legged
Models**

The Lucky Loser

**The Screaming
Woman**

The Terrified Typist

The Waylaid Wolf



COMPLETE & UNABRIDGED

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PERRY MASON
IN
THE CASE OF.

The Glamorous Ghost
The Terrified Typist
The Lucky Loser
The Screaming Woman
The Long-Legged Models
The Foot-Loose Doll
The Waylaid Wolf

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ERLE
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SEVEN
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THE CASE OF
THE GLAMOROUS GHOST

FOREWORD

George Burgess Magrath has exerted a tremendous influence in the field of legal medicine and in the detection of crime.

Dr. Magrath's life is a splendid example of the manner in which a man's dynamic personality can spread out over the years, affecting the lives of others long after he is gone.

Many of my readers will remember what I have written about Frances G. Lee, the fabulous character who is mainly responsible for founding the Department of Legal Medicine at Harvard Medical School; a woman in her seventies who is respected by police officers everywhere, who is an authority in the field of homicide investigation and who has been appointed a captain in the New Hampshire State Police.

The fact that Captain Frances G. Lee became interested in legal medicine was due to the influence of Dr. Magrath. The fact that Captain Frances G. Lee invented her famous nutshell studies in unexplained death has been responsible for training hundreds of competent officers so that they can detect murders which otherwise might go not only undetected but unsuspected.

One of Dr. Magrath's greatest contributions to investigative science was his devotion to truth.

In every one of his field notebooks he wrote just inside the front cover a quotation from the writings of Dr. Paul Brouardel, the noted French doctor who was one of the first pioneers in legal medicine.

The quotation is as follows:

"IF THE LAW HAS MADE YOU A WITNESS, REMAIN A MAN OF SCIENCE: YOU HAVE NO VICTIM TO AVENGE, NO GUILTY OR INNOCENT PERSON TO RUIN OR SAVE. YOU MUST BEAR TESTIMONY WITHIN THE LIMITS OF SCIENCE."

Dr. Magrath was a colorful personality. There was about him a flair for the dramatic. He was tall and heavy-set with superb shoulders and one of his

greatest pleasures was rowing, or, more properly, sculling on the Charles River. He wore his hair long like Paderewski, his dress was informal, usually of soft tweeds, and his tie was invariably a dark Windsor.

There was about his personality something compelling that enabled him to dominate situations without apparently making the slightest effort to do so. He was in spirit a pioneer, blazing a trail in the investigative field, and he had all of the personality of the true pioneer. He was born on October 2nd, 1870. He died December 11th, 1938. During his lifetime he examined over twenty-thousand cases of unexplained deaths, and the present highly efficient science of homicide investigation is in large measure due to the trail blazed by Dr. Magrath. The blaze marks on that trail are Truth, Accuracy, Efficiency and Scientific Integrity. Today many feet follow along that trail, and the wayfarers either follow those same blaze marks or become hopelessly lost in the forest of prejudice.

The truly scientific investigator of homicide remains on the one trail that follows those same blazes which Dr. Magrath used for his own guidance.

And so I dedicate this book to the memory of:

GEORGE BURGESS MAGRATH, M.D.

Erle Stanley Gardner

CHAPTER ONE

It was Della Street, Perry Mason's confidential secretary, who first called the lawyer's attention to the glamorous ghost.

"Why the grin?" Mason asked, as Della Street folded a newspaper and handed it to him.

"This should interest you."

"What is it?"

"A ghost that people saw last night out at Sierra Vista Park, a very glamorous ghost. A seductive ghost. It should make a case you'd be interested in."

Mason said, "You've already interested me."

He took the newspaper Della Street had handed him and read in headlines:

SEXY SPOOK STARTLES SPOONERS GIRL GIVES CHASE WITH JACK HANDLE

The clipping had been written up in a light vein, a combination of news and humor.

The story as reported read:

Last night was a night of witchery. The moon was full and fragrant wisps of breeze gently rustled the trees and greenery.

George Belmont, 28, of 1532 West Woodwane Street and Diane Foley were sitting in their parked car, looking at the moon. Suddenly a beautiful wraith, apparently in the nude save for a fluttering diaphanous covering, drifted out of the shadows toward the car.

According to George, the wraith was making the motions of a classical dance. Diane, outraged, described the same occurrence to police with far less imagery—a difference in viewpoint, no doubt.

"We were sitting there talking," Diane told Officer Stanley of

the park patrol, "when a girl appeared in little or nothing and deliberately started vamping my boy friend. She wasn't dancing, she was giving the old come-on, and don't think I didn't know it."

"A seductive come-on?" Officer Stanley inquired.

"Call it seductive if you want to," Diane snorted. "It was just a wiggle as far as I'm concerned."

"And what did George do?"

"He said, 'Look at that,' and started to get out of the car. That was when I went into action."

"What did you do?"

"I grabbed up the first thing that was available and took after her, saying that I'd teach her better than to come prancing around without any clothes on, making passes at my boy friend."

According to police the "first thing that was available" was a jack handle which would certainly have inflicted what the law refers to as "grievous bodily injury," and, beyond any question, was within the classification of a deadly weapon.

The ghost, however, did not seem to realize its desperate plight. It was too busy getting out of there—but fast. Diane Foley, hampered by her more conventional garb, took after the ghost in a headlong pursuit which was punctuated from time to time with infuriated screams, arousing the attention of residents who bordered on the park and resulting in more than half a dozen calls to the police.

According to Diane the ghost did the screaming. According to neighbors Diane certainly was doing some screaming herself. As one man who telephoned the police said in a later report, "It sounded like a couple of coyotes out in the desert—and you know what that sounds like. One sounds like half a dozen. Two sound like... well, that was the way it sounded out there in the park. I certainly thought someone was getting murdered, or that at least it was a hand-to-hand hair-pulling match."

Be that as it may the "ghost," which George described as having a figure "simply out of this world," won the race and a breathless, indignant Diane, still carrying the jack handle, returned to the car.

Police, however, alerted by a dozen calls, converged on the neighborhood and soon were rewarded by picking up a young woman walking demurely along clad in an opaque raincoat. In view of the cloudless night the raincoat seemed incongruous.

Interrogated by police, the young woman professed complete ignorance as to her name or address. Her mind, she said, was a blank.

Once at headquarters, it was soon discovered that her mind wasn't all that was blank. Under the raincoat, her only apparel was the remains of an expensive, gossamer slip, torn into the equivalent of Salome's seven veils.

Police felt they had apprehended the ghost, but the evidence was circumstantial. Diane was vague as to any identification and she refused to permit George to be called as a witness.

In view of the seeming amnesia the "ghost" is at present being held in the emergency hospital while police seek to learn her identity.

"Well," Mason said, "it would make a most interesting problem in identification. She should have committed some crime. It's too bad."

"Don't bewail your luck so soon," Della Street said. "I didn't call your attention to the article in the paper simply to send your thoughts woolgathering, but in my official capacity as your secretary."

"The half sister of this glamorous ghost is impatiently waiting in the outer office."

"The deuce!" Mason exclaimed. "What does she want?"

"Apparently the family wants you to represent the ghost. There seems to be a consensus of opinion that the ghost is up to her neck in a scrape of some kind and that you must get her out."

"What's the half sister's name, Della?"

"Mrs. William Kensington Jordan, and she seems to have the trappings of wealth and respectability."

Mason grinned. "Your build-up, Della, is excellent. By all means, let's see Mrs. William Jordan—but first tell me what she looks like."

"Neat, refined, well-groomed, nice clothes, neat ankles, expensive shoes..."

"How old?"

"Twenty-eight to thirty."

"Good-looking?"

Della Street hesitated a moment. "The lips are just a bit too thin. She tries to build them up with lipstick and...well, somehow it throws her face out of balance. A full mouth just doesn't go with that type of face. But she has nice, intelligent eyes."

"Well, let's take a look at her," Mason said. "I'm interested in the ghost."

"You would be," Della said dryly, heading for the outer office.

Mrs. Jordan, on being ushered into Mason's private office, stood for a moment in the doorway, regarding the lawyer with searching scrutiny. Della Street said, "This is Mr. Mason, Mrs. Jordan."

"Thank you," Mrs. Jordan snapped without moving her eyes in the slightest.

Mason smiled affably. "How do you do, Mrs. Jordan?"

She came forward and gave him her hand. "How do you do, Mr. Mason? It's a pleasure to meet you—and see that your looks measure up to your extraordinary reputation."

"Thank you," the lawyer said gravely, avoiding his secretary's amused eyes.

Mrs. Jordan's speech had that sharp, precise articulation which should go with thin lips, and her manner was incisive.

"Do sit down," Mason said, indicating the client's comfortable chair, "and tell me what you wanted to see me about."

"Have you read the paper?" Mrs. Jordan asked, seating herself, crossing her knees and carefully smoothing the skirt down over her legs.

Mason glanced at Della Street, nodded to Mrs. Jordan.

"Well," she said, "then you've read about this ghost, this exhibitionist in Sierra Vista Park who made a naked spectacle of herself in the moonlight."

Mason nodded. "I take it," he said, "from your description that you are not a believer in the supernatural."

"Not when Eleanor is concerned."

"And who is Eleanor?"

"The ghost. She's my half sister," she said.

"You have communicated that information to the authorities?" Mason asked.

"No."

"Why not?"

"I... I want to know where I stand first."

"Perhaps," Mason told her, "you'd better explain."

Mrs. Jordan made no attempt to disguise the bitterness in her voice.

"Eleanor," she said, "is an exhibitionist and an opportunist. She's also a liar."

"Evidently you have very little affection for your half sister."

"Don't misunderstand me, Mr. Mason. I hate the ground she walks on."

"I take it," Mason said, "that you have recognized the picture that was published in the newspaper, the picture of the young woman who has amne—"

"Amnesia my foot!" she interrupted. "She doesn't have any more amnesia than I do. She got in a jam once before and pulled that amnesia business to get herself out. She's done something that's a lulu this time and this is just her way of arousing sympathy and easing herself back into the family fold."

"I think," Mason said, "you'd better give me *all* the circumstances."

"About two weeks ago," Mrs. Jordan said, "Eleanor ran away with Douglas Hepner."

"And who's Douglas Hepner?"

"A drifter, a traveler, a fortune-hunter and an opportunist. He's as phony as a three-dollar bill."

"And you say your half sister ran away with him?"

"That's right."

"Marriage?" Mason asked.

"That's what *she* says."

"You were not at the ceremony?"

"Of course not. They simply took off. My husband, my father and I were away for the week end. When we returned we found a wire stating that they were happily married."

"Where was the wire from?"

"Yuma, Arizona."

"Lots of marriages are solemnized in Yuma," Mason said dryly. "People go there simply to get married."

"That's probably why they went there."

"To get married?"

"No, because Yuma has that reputation."

"You don't think they're actually married?"

"I don't know *what* to think, Mr. Mason. As far as Eleanor is concerned I've given up trying to think a long time ago."

"Well, suppose you tell me about her."

"My maiden name was Corbin. I'm Olga Corbin Jordan."

"Is your husband living?"

She nodded.

"You're living together?"

"Of course. Bill and I are very happy. I came here alone because he couldn't get away."

"But he knows you're coming?"

"Certainly. I don't have any secrets from Bill. Dad doesn't know all the details. I simply told him I was going to see a lawyer and that he wasn't to say a word to the police or to the newspapers until after he heard from me."

"You recognized your half sister's picture in the paper?"

"Yes. It's a good likeness. Other people will recognize it too. That's why I was so impatient trying to get in to see you. We don't have much time."

"All right, just what do you want me to do?"

"Eleanor has been in four or five scrapes. Someone has always come to the rescue and got her out. Dad has always been most indulgent with her and... well, I think she's the apple of his eye. She's spoiled and thinks she can wrap any man around her little finger. She's loaded with sex appeal, and does she use it!"

"Is she oversexed?" Mason asked.

"No, but the men whom she comes in contact with think *they're* oversexed. You've been around, Mr. Mason. You know that type of woman."

"How does she get along with women?"

"She doesn't deal with women. She makes her play for men and, believe me, she's clever at it. Of course, it's flattering—she makes them think they're wonderful—but when you have to live with that sort of thing day in and day out, week in and week out, when you know each new victim will be a sucker, you become disgusted with the whole thing."

"Particularly if you don't like her in the first place," Mason said dryly.

"Well, I don't like her," Olga Jordan blazed. "She's been a devastating influence on Dad ever since she was five years old."

"Is your mother living?"

She shook her head.

"You say Eleanor is your half sister?"

"I'll give you the highlights, Mr. Mason. I was born when Father was thirty years old. I'm twenty... I'm thirty now. Dad is sixty. Mother died when I was five years old. Then when I was eight this Sally Levan came into Dad's life."

"She was Eleanor's mother?"

"That's right. And she had one definite, fixed idea in mind from the time she first met Dad. That was to throw her hooks into him and take him for all she could get. She raved about Dad and about how she loved every hair of his head. She wanted to raise a family and Eleanor was the result—not because she gave a hang about a family but she knew that as long as Dad had me she couldn't compete with that bond unless she had a child of her own who would be Dad's daughter and... Oh, I was only eight years old at the time, and I know an eight-year-old child isn't supposed to notice those things, but, believe me, I saw it just as plain as day."

"She died?"

"Rather suddenly. Yes, she died. And I'll tell you, Mr. Mason, I've never made a point of being a hypocrite. I was eleven years old then, but I could see things just as clearly as I can see them now, and I was glad she died. I was glad then and I've been glad ever since."

"And thereafter you and Eleanor grew up together?"

"Thereafter I had the job of trying to be an older sister and a mother. Dad called me in and explained my responsibilities. I determined to do the best I could. I liked Eleanor at that time. I hated her mother, but I didn't have any feeling against Eleanor."

"That came later?" Mason asked.

"That came later."

"How much later?" Mason asked, glancing at Della Street.

"Not a lot later," Mrs. Jordan confessed. "By the time Eleanor was five years old you could see that she was her mother's child all over. She has beautiful

large blue eyes, blonde hair that gives her an innocent sweet look—it's so fine and has such a sheen to it that it's almost like a halo, and she started cultivating that angelic look. She was just such a sweet, poor little motherless morsel that people fell all over themselves to help her.

"She used that technique until she learned about men—and then there was no stopping her."

"Go on," Mason said.

"Well, she would have caused Dad a lot of heartbreak if Dad had known about it. Dad never did know all the details. Bill and I helped cover things up. On occasion we lied our heads off. One time when we were on a vacation and Eleanor was supposed to have been with us, we backed up her alibi and lied like troopers."

"She wasn't with you?"

"No. Heaven knows where she was. But she told Dad she was going up to join us. We probably never would have learned anything about it if it hadn't been for the fact that we called up Dad to see how he was getting along and Dad asked how Eleanor was enjoying the trip. It took me just half a second to get the picture and for his sake I told him she was having the time of her life."

"Your father is fond of her?"

"Dad has been hypnotized by her, just as he was hypnotized by her mother. But I think Dad is beginning to get his eyes open just a little bit."

"And now you believe that she's this ghost who...?"

"I know it," she interrupted. "I could almost tell it even if it weren't for the picture in the paper. That technique is Eleanor's. It's just like her. She ran away with Douglas Hepner. Heaven knows what happened. Whatever it is you can expect the worst. All right, she had to come back to the family fold, but she's afraid of something. Something's happened so she has to make a plea for sympathy and sneak up on Dad's blind side."

"So she goes out in the moonlight, doing the dance of the seven veils and manages to get herself caught by the police—which, of course, she'd planned all along—and looks at them with those wide blue eyes of hers and says she doesn't know who she is, that she hasn't the faintest idea of the past. It's all a blank to her. So the police take her to the hospital, her picture is published in the paper and then the family is supposed to come rushing to her. There'll be a reunion. We'll get psychiatrists to get her memory back and in the midst of all that sympathy and sweet helplessness the thing that she's done that she's afraid of will come to light and she'll be forgiven."

Mason's eyes narrowed as he studied Mrs. Jordan. "Then why not go to the hospital and identify her," he asked, "and get it over with? If that's the game she's playing there's not much you can do about it. Why consult a lawyer?"

"I'm consulting you, Mr. Mason, partially because I'm tired of this whole business, and partially because I want to spare Dad as much as I can. I'm afraid—afraid of what Eleanor's done this time."

"Why?"

"This is... well, this is carrying things plenty far, even for Eleanor."

"And what do you want *me* to do?"

"I want you to go to the hospital with me. I want you to be there when I make the identification. I want you to take charge of things. You'll know how to handle the resulting publicity. You'll know how to handle reporters, and then I want you to sit down with Eleanor and I want you to *force* her to tell you *what* it is she's running away from, what it is that's happened, what has caused her to

adopt this weird method of trying to arouse public sympathy and get herself reinstated with the family."

"And then?" Mason asked.

"And then," she said, "I want you to use every bit of resourcefulness at your command to try and square things, to try and clean the mess up so that... so that the newspapers don't get hold of things and so that Dad doesn't have too much of a shock."

"Is your father in good health?"

"Physically," she said, "he's straight as a ramrod, but he's in a peculiar position. Dad's in the wholesale jewelry business. He specializes in diamonds. People trust him. His word is as good as a written guarantee. If something should happen that would humiliate him, if there should be a big family scandal—well, it would crush him."

"And you think Eleanor may have...?"

"I think that whatever Eleanor's done this time," she interrupted, "it's *really* something. This isn't just an ordinary scrape. This is a dilly."

Mason hesitated. "I'm afraid, Mrs. Jordan," he said at length, "that you're letting your suspicions and your prejudices build up a set of circumstances in your mind that are purely imaginary. Why don't you wait until...?"

She shook her head impatiently. "There isn't time, Mr. Mason. Quite a few people know Eleanor. In all probability the hospital is receiving calls by this time, telling them who she is. We're going to have to work fast."

Mrs. Jordan opened her purse, took out a folded oblong of paper. "I know you're a busy and high-priced lawyer. I have made out a check payable to you for twenty-five hundred dollars, Mr. Mason. That is in the nature of a retainer."

Mason raised his eyebrows. "Usually," he said, "people go to an attorney and ask him how much..."

"I know," she said, "but this is different. This is an emergency."

Mason asked, "You want me to go to the hospital with you and then what?"

"I'll identify Eleanor, and then I want you to talk with her privately and alone after you've got rid of the reporters."

Mason said, "You will, of course, identify her as your half sister?"

"Naturally. And as far as the public is concerned the scene will be one of great affection and sympathy. Outwardly I'll do everything that the situation requires."

"Do you expect to have your father see her?"

"Not until after you've found out what has really happened."

"Do you think she'll tell me?"

"Probably not. You're going to have to talk with her and get clues. You'll need detectives. We will, of course, pay all expenses."

"What do you think Eleanor will do?" Mason asked.

"I can tell you *exactly* what she'll do. She'll look at us and turn her head away in bored indifference, a poor child who doesn't know who she is or anything about her past. And then I'll say, 'Eleanor, don't you know me?'

"She'll turn those big blue eyes on me as though I'm a total stranger and then suddenly the eyes will begin to widen. She'll blink. She'll do a double take. There'll be a ghost of a smile and then suddenly memory will come back with a rush and she'll exclaim, 'Olga! Olga, my *darling*!' and throw her arms around me and cling to me like a drowning man clinging to a piece of driftwood."

"And then?" Mason asked.

"And then there'll be the terrific shock of readjustment. Memory will come

pouring back to her in a flood. She'll pull out all the stops—and finally she'll wind up by remembering everything about her past life up until the moment she disappeared with Douglas Hepner, and from that time on her memory will be a complete blank. She simply won't know where she's been or what she's been doing during the past two weeks.

"She'll ask about Dad. She'll ask questions that show that in her poor little deranged mind she thinks it is still two weeks ago. It will come as a shock to her when I explain that there's a missing gap of two weeks."

"And she won't remember anything that happened? Even the show she put on in the park?"

"She'll look at newspaper reporters with shocked incredulity when they tell her about it."

"To carry through a situation of that sort is going to take a good deal of histrionic ability," Mason said. "Do you think she can do it and do it convincingly?"

"She'll fool everybody on earth," Mrs. Jordan said, "except one person."

"Who's that?"

"Me. I'm telling you that in advance, Mr. Mason, because she's going to fool *you*!"

Mason smiled. "Lawyers become somewhat cynical."

"She'll fool you," Olga Jordan asserted positively. "She'll fool you and when she finds out what you're there for, she'll hypnotize you. You'll be just like all the other men. You'll want to protect her. Don't misunderstand me. I *want* you to protect her and help her out of the scrape she's in because that's the only way you can help Dad and do a job protecting the family."

"When do we go to the hospital?" Mason asked.

"Now," she said, looking at her watch. "We haven't much time."

Mason nodded to Della Street. "I'll be out for an hour or an hour and a half, Della. Come on," he said to Mrs. Jordan, "let's get going."

CHAPTER TWO

The head nurse in the front office said, "Oh, yes, Mrs. Jordan. The police have been trying to reach you for the last hour. They're anxious to see if you can make an identification."

"There's a very great resemblance to my sister," Mrs. Jordan said. "I feel certain it is she."

"Yes. We've had several telephone calls since the picture was published in the paper from people who have told us they were sure it was Eleanor Corbin."

"Eleanor Hepner," Mrs. Jordan corrected firmly. "She was married about two weeks ago."

"Oh, I see. Well, would you mind going up, Mrs. Jordan? The doctor left word that you were to be admitted as soon as we could get in touch with you. He feels that the emotional shock of seeing you may do a good deal to restore the patient's memory. Of course, you understand in these cases we never know just