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Libra Pictura Nero Wolfe

Compiled with reverence by Michael Bishop

Introduction

It started out as a simple idea: Collect a picture of each orchid that is mentioned in one of the Nero Wolfe stories.

After all, it would be reasonable to expect that some earlier enthusiast had collated the orchid series, and it would probably be posted somewhere on the Internet.

Well, indeed, such was the case---sort of.

There are indeed such lists available, three were quickly found, but it was obvious that they had been compiled with full appreciation of early efforts (errors of commission and omission were repeated) but most surprising, they were all woefully incomplete!

Accordingly, each and every story was read anew in an attempt to rectify the list.

Next, the Internet was searched for a suitable image of each of the orchids.

Orchids, or even flowers in general, appear to be favorites of photographers, so the selection among the many choices was not easy.

Surprisingly, however, images of all of the orchids named by Rex Stout are not to be found. Some are restricted by copyright or electronic transmission filter, some are of very low resolution and make poor copies, and some appear simply to be figments of Stout's imagination.

In tracing the records of orchid illustrations, there are indications that there are fads in orchid culture, and some of the orchids named in the early Nero Wolfe stories may simply have fallen out of favor, and so photographs are not available. Nevertheless, some orchid images have also been captured in drawings or paintings. Others have appeared on postage stamps or glazed tiles. Examples of these alternative portrayals have been included in the collection simply for variety and entertainment.

In the *libra pictura*, each orchid image has the passage from the book where the orchid is mentioned. Only the chapter citation is given, since the correct page numbers are a function of the edition in which it appears. (There was a lot of trouble trying to decide what was the appropriate punctuation, spelling, and italicization for the excerpts, so the sharp-eyed quibblers will have a field day, the rest of us will just enjoy them. And besides, Stout or his editors and proofreaders were not consistent either. It might even be said that Stout was indifferent, perhaps even cavalier, toward the proper spelling of orchid names.)

In compiling the collection, a decision was made to include at least one illustration from each one of the stories, even those that did not have any orchids named. And moreover, some of the more familiar Wolfean artifacts that appeared regularly are included. (At some point a halt had to be called on the further addition of these supplements, otherwise the collection would have become a Classic Comic book.)

In each orchid image, if the caption is without parenthesis, the orchid is indeed the one named. If a parenthesis is included, the actual orchid has not been found, or it is one of Stout's imaginary ones, so the flower shown is either of the appropriate type, but a different subtype, or it is one that is just plain pretty. Additions, corrections, and suggestions are welcomed, again a challenge to the eagle-eyed.

Otherwise, just enjoy the pictures. Happy viewing!

The Orchids Of Nero Wolfe

The complete listing from Michael Bishop

(In chronological book publication order)

I set out to make Julie an album containing a picture of each of the orchids mentioned in the NW stories. Found out lots of interesting things, such as some possibly imaginary names, erratic spellings, and lots of other flora names.

Anyway, one of the most challenging tasks in trying to complete the album was to find a complete list of the orchids mentioned in the Stout works. So, of course, that meant I had a challenge to do it up right.

I am sure that some of the more enthusiastic Wolfeans will find it interesting. And of course, I would like to know if I missed any orchids or made any mistakes.

Fer-de-Lance

Angraecum sesquipedale
Cattleya dowiana aurea
Cymbidium Alexanderi
Cattleya
Laelia
Odontoglossum
Oncidium
Miltonia
Laeliocattleya Lustre
Brassocattlaelia Truffautiana
Miltonia blueanaeximina
Dendrobium chlorostele
Cymbidium
Dendrobium Melpomene
Dendrobium Findlayanum

The League of Frightened Men

Cattleya
Odontoglossum
Miltonia
Brassocattlaelia Truffautiana
Dendrobium

The Rubber Band

Oncidium
Cattleya trianae
Odontoglossum
Miltonia
Cattleya
Laelia
Cymbidium
Laeliocattleya Lustre
Laeliocattleya

The Red Box

Coelogyne pandurata
Laeliacattleya luminosa aurea
Cattleya

Too Many Cooks none

Some Buried Caesar

Paphiopedilum lawrenceanum
hyeanum
Paphiopedilum callosum sanderae
Laeliocattleya
Odontoglossum

Curtains for Three (3)

The Gun With Wings None

Bullet for One

Zygopetalum
Renanthera
Odontoglossum

Disguise for Murder

Brassocattleya
Laeliocattleya
Miltonia
Odontoglossum
Cattleya dowiana
Dendrobium

Murder by the Book

Phalaenopsis
Cattleya
Dendrobium chrysotoxum
Cypripedium Lord Fisher
Dendrobium Cybele
Brassocattleya
Laeliocattleya
Cattleya Dionysius
Cattleya Katadin
Cattleya peetersi
Brassocattleya Calypso
Brassocattleya fournierae
Brassocattleya Nestor
Laeliocattleya barbarossa
Laeliocattleya Carmencita
Laeliocattleya St. Gothard
Oncidium varicosum
Oncidium
Oncidium Forbesi
Cypripedium Minos
Dendrobium
Cochlioda

Triple Jeopardy (3)

Home to Roost Miltonia

The Cop Killer none

The Squirt and the Monkey none

Champagne for One

Coelogyne
Dendrobium
Renanthera
Odontoglossum
Miltonia
Phalaenopsis
Cattleya

Plot It Yourself

Cattleya gaskelliana alba
Cattleya mossiae wagneri
Phalaenopsis Aphrodite

Three at Wolfe's Door (3)

Poison a la Carte

Phalaenopsis Aphrodite
Jack in the Pulpit

Method Three for Murder none

The Rodeo Murder none

Too Many Clients

Calanthe veitchi sandhurstiana
Lycaste delicatissima

The Final Deduction

Miltonia vexillaria
Oncidium marshallianum
Dendrobium chrysotoxum
Laelia purpurata
Miltonia roezlii

Homicide Trinity (3)

Eeny Meeny Murder Mo none

Death of a Demon

Odontoglossum pyramus

Counterfeit for Murder

Miltonia roezlii
Miltonia

Gambit

Laelia gouldiana

Over My Dead Body

Odontoglossum
Dendrobium
Coelogyne
Miltonia
Lycaste
Cattleya
Oncidium

Where There's a Will

Cattleya Mossiae

Black Orchids (2)

Black Orchids

Brassocattalealia truffautiana
Brassocattalealia thorntoni
Cypripedium pubescens
Cypripedium Fissipes
Cymbidium Miranda
Phalaenopsis
Cattleya hassellii

Cordially Invited to Meet Death

Vanda

Not Quite Dead Enough (2)

Not Quite Dead Enough none

Booby Trap none

The Silent Speaker

Cattleya
Laeliocattleya
Brassocattleya thorntoni

Too Many Women

Miltonia
Phalaenopsis

And Be a Villain

Zygopetalum crinitum

Trouble in Triplicate (3)

Before I Die

Cattleya
Dendrobium
Phalaenopsis

Help Wanted, Male

Cattleya

Instead of Evidence

Dendrobium

The Second Confession

Dendrobium bensoniae
Odontoglossum harryanum

-

Prisoner's Base

Cymbidium holfordianum
Cymbidium pauwelsi

The Golden Spiders

Vanda caerulea
Vanda
Brassavola
Miltonia roezlii
Phalaenopsis Aphrodite
Cattleya
Laelia
Miltonia roezlii alba

Three Men Out (3)

Invitation to Murder none

The Zero Clue

Odontoglossum
Calanthe

This Won't Kill You none

The Black Mountain

Laeliocattleya Jaquetta
Dendrobium nobilius

Before Midnight

Cattleya mossiae
Odontoglossum
Phalaenopsis
Cattleya mossiae reineckiana
Oncidium varicosum

Three Witnesses (3)

The Next Witness none

When a Man Murders none

Die Like a Dog none

Might As Well Be Dead

Phalaenopsis stuartiana
Phalaenopsis schilleriana

Three for the Chair (3)

A Window for Death none

Immune to Murder none

Too Many Detectives none

If Death Ever Slept

Cochlioda roezliana
Odontoglossum armainvillierense

The Mother Hunt

Cypripedium lawrenceanum hyeanum

Trio for Blunt Instruments (3)

Kill Now—Pay Later none

Murder Is Corny

Dendrobium nobile
Oncidium
Laeliocattleya

Blood Will Tell

Cymbidium Doris

A Right to Die

Miltonia roezlii
Phalaenopsis Aphrodite
Vanda suavis

The Doorbell Rang

Miltonia sanderae
Odontoglossum pyramus
Phalaenopsis Aphrodite
Oncidium flexuosum

Death of a Doxy

Odontoglossum hellemense
Odontoglossum harvengtense
Odontoglossum crispum
Vanda rogersi
Odontoglossum crispo-harryanum
Odontoglossum aireworthi
Miltonia vexillaria
Miltonia roezlii

The Father Hunt

Laelia schroederi
Laelia ashworthiana
Miltonia hellemense
Phalaenopsis Aphrodite
Miltonia charlesworthi
Odontoglossum pyramus
Phalaenopsis Aphrodite sanderiana

Death of a Dude none

Please Pass the Guilt

Acampe pachyglossa
Peristeria elata
Broughtonia sanguinea
Dendrobium chrysotoxum

A Family Affair none

-

-

-

Three Doors to Death (3)

Man Alive
None

Omit Flowers
Miltonia roezlii

Door to Death
Odontoglossum cirrhosum
Odontoglossum nobile veitchianum
Phalaenopsis Aphrodite
Phalaenopsis Aphrodite dayana
Phalaenopsis Aphrodite sanderiana
Miltonia

In the Best Families
Miltonia
Phalaenopsis
Vanda peetersiana

And Four to Go (4)

Christmas Party
Odontoglossum

Easter Parade
Vanda
Vanda peetersiana
Vanda sandarae
Cattleya
Calanthe
Phalaenopsis

Fourth of July Picnic
Renanthera imschootiana

Murder Is No Joke
Laelia gouldiana

Death Times Three (3)

Bitter End
none

Frame-up For Murder
(aka Murder Is No Joke)
Vanda
Miltonia

Assault on a Brownstone
(aka Counterfeit Murder)
none

Life Magazine, 15 September, 1963

Why Nero Wolfe Likes Orchids

by Archie Goodwin

(with the byline of his agent, Rex Stout)

When people ask me why Nero Wolfe grows orchids I ask them which they are interested in orchids or him. If they ask what difference that makes, I say it makes all the difference. If they are curious about orchids, the best and simplest answer is to take them up to the plant rooms, but if they're curious about Nero Wolfe, there are a dozen different answers and they are all complicated.



Wolfe's flowers go all the way from the showiest to the shyest. He has a Cattleya hybrid, bred by him, which threw its' first flower last year, that is twice as gaudy, as anything you ever saw in a florist shop, and he has a Cymbidium hybrid, ensifolium x Sanderae, bred by him in 1953, so coy that it makes one little flower each year – off-white, the size of a dime, hidden down in the foliage. Once I saw him scowling at it and muttering, "Confound you, are you too timid or too proud?"



If he ever talks to himself he keeps it strictly private, but I have heard him talk to orchids. He'll cock his head at a bench of Miltonias in full bloom and say distinctly, "Much too loud. Why don't you learn to whisper?" Not that he ever whispers.

Wolfe started on orchids many years ago with a specimen plant of Vanda suavis, given to him by the wife of a man he had cleared of a murder rap. He kept it in the office and it petered out. He got mad, built a shed on the roof and bought 20 plants. Now the plant rooms are 34x86, the size of the house. He hasn't bought a plant from a commercial grower for 10 years, but he sells some – a hundred or more



a year.

Of the four hours a day he spends up in the plants rooms – 9 to 11 in the morning and 4 to 6 in the afternoon – not more than 20 minutes is spent looking at the flowers. First he makes a tour through the aisles,, which are 30 inches wide instead of the usual two feet – the tropical room, the intermediate, and the cool – and then on to the potting room. He nods to Theodore, the gardener, and says, "Well?" Theodore says either, "Well enough," or something like, "A pod of Coelogyne will be ready in two days,"



Then work. It may be real work, like bringing a dozen old plants from one of the rooms for dividing and repotting, or opening a bale of osmunda fiber and inspecting it; or it may be merely getting a tape and going to the cool room to measure the panicles of Odontoglossums. It can be any of a thousand chores that orchids take – mixing fertilizer, labeling, presoaking new pots, checking ventilation and humidity, adjusting shade screens, stripping bulb sheaths, chipping charcoal, and so forth, forever and ever with no amen. Except spraying. Wolfe hates it, and Theodore does it when he is not there.



Of course, most of the chores are for breeding, not growing. Buying a dozen or so orchid plants and keeping them going and blooming in a house or apartment is no trick at all, but hybridizing is a career. Usually an orchid flower is both male and female, so deciding on father and mother is up to Nero Wolfe. Having cross-pollinated, he waits seven months to a year for the seedpod to mature and ripen. A large pod will have a million or more

seeds. They are among the smallest of all plant seeds.

The preparations in a hospital operating room for an appendectomy are nothing compared to the fuss of planting a batch of orchid seed. What Wolfe has to keep out is fungus. If one microscopic fungus cell gets in a bottle with the seed, it goes to work on the nutrient jelly in which the infant flower is planted, and goodbye seed. If he does it right and is lucky in 9 or 10 months he scoops the tiny half-inch seedlings out of the bottle and plants them in community pots. A year later he transplants them to individual three-inch pots and in another two years to 4 1/2-inch pots, and crosses his fingers. Then five or six or seven years since the day he put pollen to stigma, he sees an orchid no one ever saw before. It is different from any orchid that has ever bloomed, including those in the Garden of Eden. The differences may be very slight, or there may be flaws, but about once in every five times his orchid will be worth of dad and mom, and there is one chance in a thousand that it will be an absolute stunner. Since he has seen only a fraction of the many thousands of named and listed hybrids, he can't be sure until the day some grower takes a long hard look at his baby and says casually, "Interesting little plant. I'll give you \$400 for it." Then he'll know that in a few years orchid catalogues will list one more named for him, or at least by him.



In the past 20 years Nero Wolfe has had that happen 14 times, and he has on his benches a total of 112 unnamed varieties bred by him and good enough to keep. Okay, that's very satisfactory, and it's one of the reasons he grows orchids; but it's not the main one. He grows orchids chiefly for the same reason that he wears bright yellow shirts: for the color.



I said he spends only 20 minutes of the four hours looking at the flowers, but that's a lot. Anyway he gets some special kick from color. He says you don't look at color, you feel it, and apparently he thinks that really means something.

It doesn't to me, but maybe it does to you and you know exactly how he feels as he opens the door to the plant rooms and walks in on the big show. I have never known a day when less than a hundred plants were in bloom, and sometimes there are a thousand, from the pure white of dainty little *Dendrobium nobile virginalis* to the yellow-tan-bronze-mahogany-purple of big and gangly *Laelia tenebrosa*. It is unquestionably worth a look – or if you react the same way Wolfe does, a feel.



One question I don't know the answer to and can only guess at is why he cuts the ones he brings down to the office every morning for the vase on his desk. Why not bring the plant, since then the flowers would be good for another week or more? Because he would have to take back up again? No; he could just add that to my daily chores. Because he thinks that particular spike or raceme has been around long enough? No; sometimes it will be a very special item, like the dwarf Vanda with green dots that a commercial grower offered him \$1,200 for. Because he hates to carry things? That could be, but he carries plenty of them from the growing rooms to the potting rooms and back again. The best guess is that he doesn't want to give a plant a shadow of an excuse not to go on blossoming at peak efficiency. If a *Zygopetalum* has a cluster of eight flowers this year, and next year only six, it could blame it on a day in the office – not enough light and temperature and humidity wrong, and although you can say pfui to an orchid plant, and Wolfe often does, there's no real satisfaction in it.



How does he decide each morning which one he will cut for his desk that day? I have had various theories, but none of them have stood up. One was that it depended on the bank balance. If the balance was high, say 50 grand, he would pick something extra flashy, it was low, down to four figures, it would be something subdued like a brown speckled *Dendrobium*. That theory lasted three days. When I told him about it he grunted and said, "The flower a woman chooses depends on the woman. The flower a man chooses depends on the flower."



Fer-de-Lance



Chap. 2 “Pray for this side Archie.
If it’s this one, we shall have an
Angraecum sesquipedale for Christmas.”

Chap. 3 “I would not take that
Enterprise though a *Cattleya dowiana aurea*
were to be the reward.”



Chap. 5 He was sitting
at his desk examining with a
magnifying glass the rostellum
from a *Cymbidium Alexanderi*.

Fer-de-Lance (Cont.)

Chap. 7 There were three main rooms,

one for Cattleyas,...



...Laelias,...



...one for Odontoglossums,...



Oncidiums, and ...



...Miltonia hybrids,...



Fer-de-Lance (cont.)

cattleya



down the first rows of Cattleyas...
she tried to be polite enough to
pretend there was something to see.



**Laeliocattleya
(Lustre)**

The first one that really brought her up
was a small side-bunch, only twenty or so,
of Laeliacattleya Lustre...

Brassocattlaelia (Truffautiana)



In the next walk there were some
Brassocattlaelias Truffautianas...

odontoglossum



She liked the Odontoglossums...

Fer-de-Lance (Cont.)

better than the cattleyas
and hybrids!



...she like a little thing that I had
never looked at twice, a
Miltoniablueanaeximina...

Chap. 10 "Those confounded insects were
trying to make me forget that one of the
Dendrobiums chlorostele is showing two buds."



Chap. 12 He came in with a bunch of
Cymbidiums in his hand which he put into a
vase on his desk, then he got in his chair and
flipped the mail.

Fer -de-Lance (Cont.)

Chap.15

..." of course I remembered the Brassocattlaelias Truffautianas in her hand when she came down the stairs with you. "



Brassolaeliocattleya (Truffautiana)



Dendrobium (Melpomene)

Chap.18

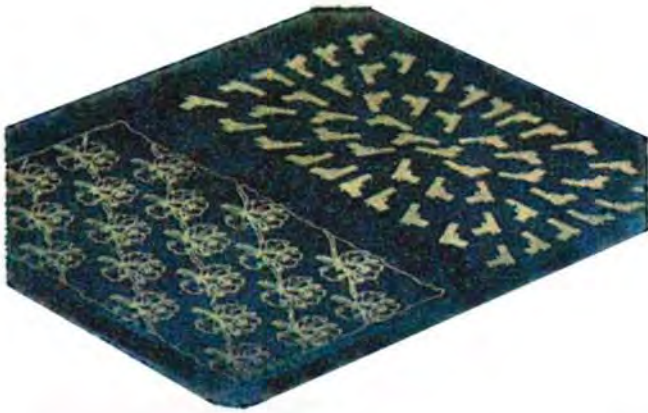
..."he has succeeded in hybridizing a Dendrobium Melpomene...

...with a Findlayanum and offers me a seedling."



dendrobium findlayanum

League of Frightened Men



Chap. 12

“ I had a nice piece of leather of my own... It was brown, ostrich-skin, and was tooled in gold all over the outside. On one side the tooling was fine lines about half an inch apart, with flowers stemming out from them; the flowers were orchids; the workmanship was so good that you could tell Wolfe had given the guy a Cattleya to work from.”



“ Wolfe was at the potting-bench with Horstmann, spreading out some osmundine and leaning over to smell it; a dozen or so pots of Odontoglossums, overgrown, were at his elbow.”

League of Frightened Men (Cont.)

Chap. 15 "Ditson had phoned to say that he had a dozen bulbs of a new *Miltonia* just arrived from England, and had offered to give Wolfe a couple if he would send for them."



Chap. 16 "Archie, if you would show Mr. Hibbard the south room, the one above mine..."

"It'll be clammy as the devil, it hasn't been used... he can have mine..."

"No. Fritz has aired it and the heat is on; it has been properly prepared, even to the Brassocattlealias Truffautianas in the bowl."

Chap. 22 "... he wilted like a *Dendrobium* with root rot."



The Rubber Band

Chap. 2 “I found him in the middle room turning some off-season *Oncidiums* that were about to bud...”

“You expect, I presume, to draw your salary at the end of the month.”

“Okay.”

I wanted to reach out and tip over one of the *Oncidiums*, but decided it wouldn't be diplomatic, so I faded.”



10
Chap. 1 “As I was going out I stopped where Theodore Horstmann was turning out some old *Cattleya trianae* and growled at him:

“You're going to get shot in the gizzard.”
I swear to God he looked pale.”



Chap. 6 “Saul and I pulled off the fancy gray tape and took the lid off. I said, “It's a thousand roses...”



The Rubber Band (cont.)

Chap. 11 “Of course they were more startling in February than they were in October, but Wolfe and Horstmann had developed a technique for forcing them that made them worth looking at no matter when it was. Inside the door of the first room, which had ...

...Odontoglossums, ...



...Oncidiums ...



...and Miltonia hybrids, ...

Rowcliff and the dick stopped short.



The Rubber Band (cont.)

The angle-iron staging gleamed in its silver paint, and on the concrete benches and shelves three thousand pots of orchids showed greens and blues and yellows and reds. ... in the next room, Cattleyas, Laelias, hybrids and miscellaneous,



Theodore Horstmann was over at one side pouring fertilizer on a row of Cymbidiums...



on the boards had been placed 35 or 40 pots of Lealiocattleya Lustre... he and I lifted the pots of Laeliocattleyas that Wolfe had been spraying..."



The Red Box

Chap. 2 "... who had recently received from an agent in Sarawak four bulbs of a pink *Coelogyne pandurata* never seen before and had scorned Wolfe's offer of three thousand bucks for two of them."



coelogyne pandurata



laeliocattleya (luminosa aurea)

Chap. 9 "When I got back Wolfe was still having recess; he had taken a *Laeliocattleya luminosa aurea* from the vase on his desk and was lifting the anthers to look at the pollinia with his glass. But at least he hadn't started on the atlas."

Chap. 13 "... listened with his back as he examined a bench of *Cattleya* seedlings."



Cattleya

Too Many Cooks



Chap. I "...he was frantic with fear because he was alone on the train and it might begin to move."



"We are due at Kanawha Spa at 11:25 tomorrow morning! Fourteen hours! ...in case of delay we would have to wait for an afternoon train! Should anything happen to our engine—"

Some Buried Caesar

Chap. 6 “Wolfe had busted precedence ...to exhibit ...three new crosses with *paphiopedilum lawrenceanum* hyeantum to get an award over one... produced by crossing *paphiopedilum callosum sanderae*... with a new species from Burma.”



Chap. 15 “Raymond Plehn, who was showing *Laeliocattleyas* and *Odontoglossums* was there... we looked over his entry, which wasn't in competition with ours.”



Over My Dead Body



Chap. 1

"Passing through the first two rooms... with ...thousands of pots holding everything from baby seedlings to odontoglossums and dendrobiums in full bloom. "



"I found Wolfe... scowling reproachfully at an enormous coelogyne blossom with white petals and orange keels."

Over My Dead Body (Cont.)

I handed Horstmann the (germination) cards. "For that batch of miltonias and lycastes."



...I heard the door of his personal elevator clanging, and a moment later he entered. A pace short of his desk he arrested his progress to acknowledge the visitor's presence with a little bow which achieved only one degree off the perpendicular, then continued to his chair, got deposited, glanced at the vase of cattleyas and the morning mail under the weight, put his thumb to the button to summon beer, leaned back and adjusted himself, and sighed.



Over My Dead Body (Cont.)



cattleya gaskelliana

Chap. 11

..Wolfe rose from his chair with a sigh and said to me:

"Put her to bed in the south room, above mine,
and lock the door."

Fritz, half asleep and half displeased,
went along to make sure the bed was habitable and
that towels and accessories were on hand:

and for the honor of the house he brought with him
the vase of cattleyas from Wolfe's desk.

She might have had no nightie or slippers or toothbrush,
but by golly she had orchids.

Chap. 13

"That's too bad. By the way, where
did you put those germination records
on the oncidium hybrids?..."

"Christalmighty", I said bitterly,

"Here's your daughter sizzling on a spot,
and here I am with blood on my finger...
and you prate--why don't you try doing
a little work for a change--."

"I can't work with nothing to work on"...

"Where did you put those records?"



oncidium

Where There's a Will

Chap. 1

“Is that a centaurus?”...

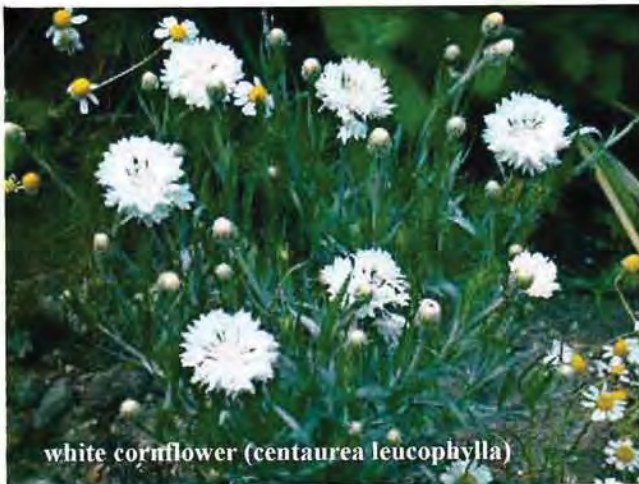
“I never saw a centaurea of that color before.”

“It isn't. A centaurea cyaneus has a much closer formation—”

“I didn't say centaurea cyaneus, madam.”



centaurea cyaneus (blue cornflower)



white cornflower (centaurea leucophylla)

“I had in mind centaurea leucophylla.”

“I've never seen one. Anyway, that isn't a centaurea leuco-anything. It's a dianthus superbus.”



dianthus superba

Where There's a Will (Cont.)

Chap. 17

"This is that fellow Dawson...
he's got a crate of Cattleya Mossiae
from Venezuela, and he wants a
hundred bucks for a dozen."



cattleya mossiae

Chap. 18

"A wilted cornflower was found..."



cornflower



briar rose (rosa setigera)

hanging on a rose briar...
you discarded your cornflower and
replaced it with a wild rose."

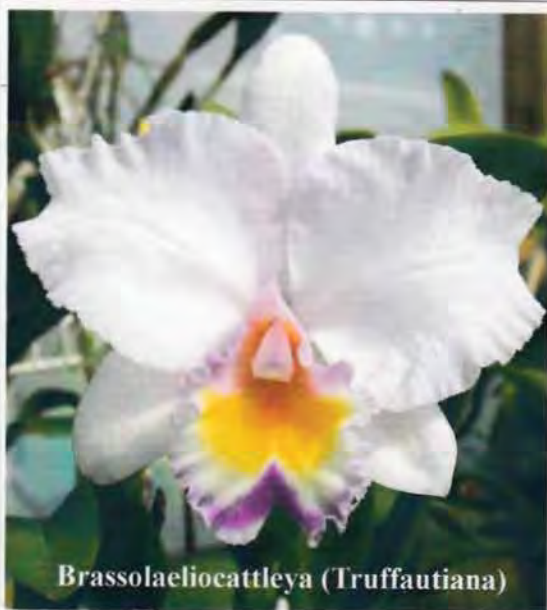
Black Orchids

Chap. 1

"What color are they?"

"They're not black."

"Black flowers are never black.
What color are they?"



Brassolaeliocattleya (Truffautiana)

Chap. 2

"Look at the leaves on the peony bushes..."



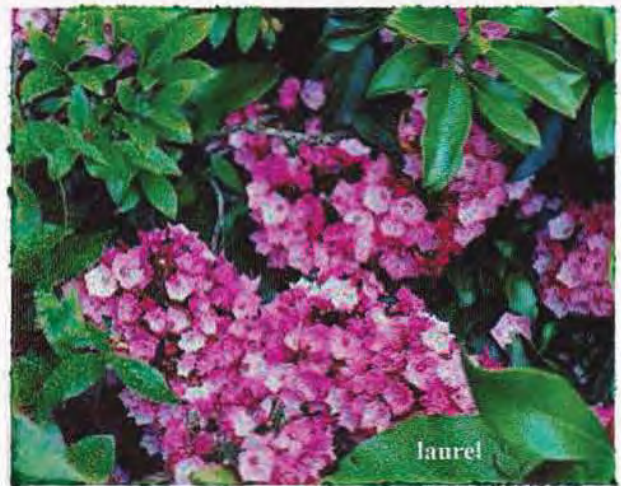
Iris

"The labellum is large, as large as aurea, about like Truffautiana. Cepals lanceolate. Throat tinged with orange--"



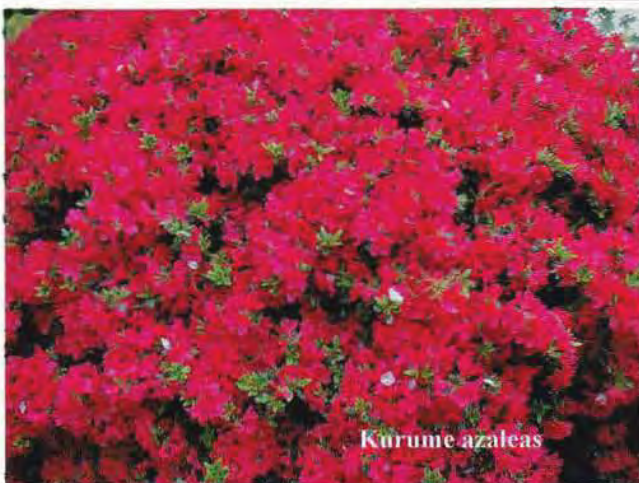
peony bush

Black Orchids (Cont.)



“They are not peonies. They are azaleas and laurel...”

“...the finest display of *Brassocattleya thurstonii* I had ever seen.”



“Do you know anything about the Kurume yellows?”... a disease... first found... on some Kurume azaleas ...

Black Orchids (Cont.)



Updegraff lost his entire plantation...
of what he called rhodaleas.



"That's a fine group of Cypripedium pubescens you have."
Very Fine. The Fissipes--

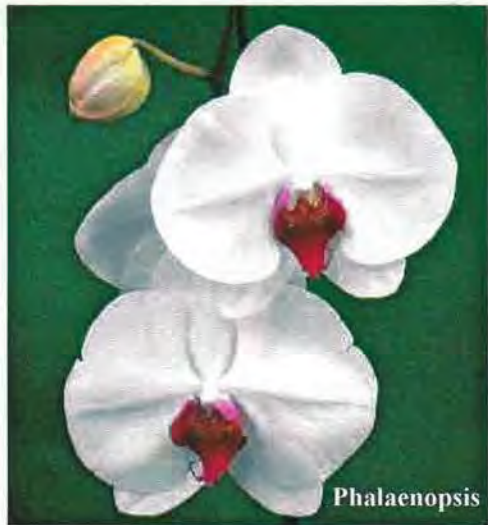


"Your peonies look nice," I said
socially. Someone tittered...I stared and
compelled an eye. "Yes, madam,
peonies..."

What's a Cymbidium Miranda? You don't know,
I've known that since I was knee-high to
a grasshopper.



Black Orchids (Cont.)



Phalaenopsis

What's a Phalaenopsis? Don't you know?"



rhododendron

"No, I don't, but I know those are rhododendrons. Peonies! Come, Alice."

"It's none of her business if I prefer to call them peonies."



"... I turned right, past a rose garden..."



cattleya (hassellii)

"... when Hewitt offered to present him with a couple of Cattleya hassellii, Wolfe thanked him as if they were just what he asked Santa Claus for, though he had twenty specimens as good or better under his own glass."

Cordially Invited to Meet Death

“I went up to the plant rooms, where Wolfe was a sight to behold in his undershirt, cutting the tops from a row of Vandas for propagation...”



paphiopedilum



“It is not my custom to frequent memorial chapels to look at girls even if they’re good dancers. Call it a hunch. Not that I saw anything criminal, only something incredible. I filed past the casket with the throng because from a distance I had seen it and couldn’t believe it. But when I got close there it was. Eight black orchids that could have come from nowhere else in the world, and a card with his initials the way he scribbled them, “N.W.”

Not Quite Dead Enough



Chap. 5 “... when I got to the door I could make out a sign painted on it:

RACING PIGEON LOFT
ROY DOUGLAS
KEEP OUT !

Since it said keep out, naturally my impulse was to go in...”

Booby Trap



Chap. 1 “ On our way out of the house—Nero Wolfe, who was ahead of me, stopped so abruptly that I nearly bumped into him. He wheeled and confronted me, glancing at my briefcase.

“ Have you got that thing?”

I look innocent. “What thing?”

“ You know very well, That confounded grenade.”

The Silent Speaker



Chap. 13 Our strategy stinks...the doorman tells him he's being followed... so what was I supposed to do? Disguise myself as a flower girl and stand at the corner selling daffodils? Next time you plan it."

Chap. 15 "That's the level this case seems to have descended to."
"Don't badger me. I was an ass to undertake it. I have more Cattleyas than I have room for, and I could have sold five hundred of them for twelve thousand dollars."



Chap. 31 "Do you want me to pay... Twenty dollars for one orchid, one ordinary half-wilted Laeliocattleya?"

The Silent Speaker (Cont.)



Chap. 35

"So with me back at the old stand you'll have to continue to watch your step. Try pulling any fast ones and I'll still be on your neck."

"I wouldn't dream of trying to pull a fast one."

"Okay. Just so we understand each other." Cramer started for the door. I called after him:

"Hey, your package!"

He said over his shoulder, barely halting, "Oh, I forgot, that's for you, Wolfe, I hope you like it," and was on his way. Judging from the time it took him to get on out and slam the door behind him, he must have double-quickened.

I...tore the paper off...

"By God," I said when I could speak, "he brought you an orchid."

"Brassocattleya thorntoni," Wolfe purred. "Handsome."

"Nuts," I said realistically. "You've got a thousand better ones."

"Shall I throw it out?"

"Certainly not. Take it up to Theodore." Wolfe wiggled a finger at me. "Archie. One of your most serious defects is that you have no sentiment."

Too Many Women

begonia (thimbleberry)



Chap. 4 "A guy in New Hampshire who was grateful to Wolfe for something had sent him an extra offering, three plants of a new begonia named Thimbleberry..."

Miltonia



Chap. 28 I was busy at the typewriter, catching up on the germination records...

...He didn't even grunt, much less argue. I resumed on the typewriter. I finished with the Miltonias and started on the Phalaenopsis.

phalaenopsis



And Be a Villain

Chap. 12

"...he went on, sounding more truculent than he actually was, because keeping the cigar where he wanted it made him talk through his teeth. "I'm not expecting anything from you ... You look as pleased as if someone had just given you a geranium."

"I don't like geraniums."



Chap. 26

"I invite trouble only when I'm paid for it. And to grapple with him the pay would have to be high....Have you any Zygopetalum crinitum on that page?"

"Good God no. It begins with a Z."

The Second Confession

Chap. 2 ...I saw it every day, but even so, I slowed up as I passed a bunch of white and yellow *Dendrobium bensoniae* that were just at their peak.



dendrobium bensoniae



Chap. 4 “ ...you be careful where you head in on anything about my sister... she’s still clean as a rose... you know what I mean.”

Chap. 5 “ Of a thousand panes of glass and ten thousand orchid plants some were in fact still whole... Finally Wolfe got to where a dozen *Odontoglossum harryanum*, his current pride and joy, were kept. He moved the light back and forth over the gashed and fallen stems and cleaves and clusters, with fragments of glass everywhere, turned, and said quietly, “We might as well go downstairs.”



Odontoglossum harryanum

Help Wanted, Male

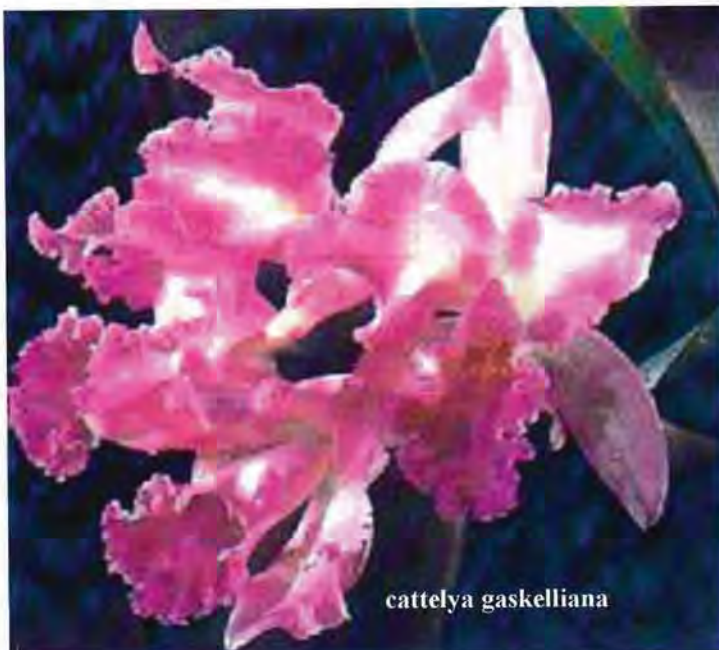
Chap. 1 “The piece of paper had been clipped from something, all four edges, with scissors or a sharp knife, and it had printed on it, not by hand, in large black script:

**YOU ARE ABOUT
TO DIE
AND I WILL
WATCH YOU
DIE!**

are
he
cal
not
to
it”

th

← 12, 7:30, 9:48



cattleya gaskelliana

Chap. 2 “Proceeding through the first three departments, past everything from rows of generating flasks to Cattleya hybrids covered with blooms, I found Wolfe in the potting room...”

Instead of Evidence

Chap. 2 “ You say a cigar did that to him?”
...He lit a cigar and it blew up.”

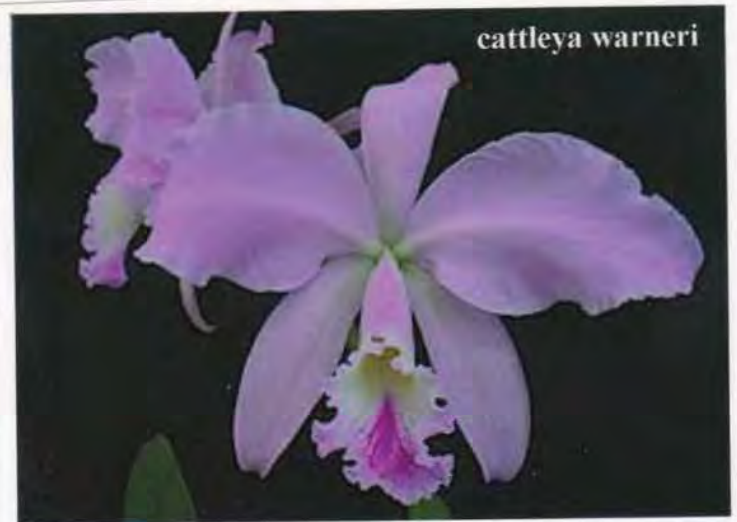


dendrobium

Chap. 4 “ It can wait... The man
from Plehn’s with the
Dendrobiums.”

Before I Die

Chap. 11 Wolfe never tries to deny he's vain, but I doubt it if he'll ever admit that it's any exercise of vanity when he takes someone who is under strain up to the plant rooms. He acts nonchalant, but I can tell when he is enjoying himself...
In the blaze of the Cattleya room she only looked dazed,...



cattleya warneri



dendrobium

Phalaenopsis really got her. She stopped dead and just looked, with her mouth open.

but the Dendrobiums and ...



phalaenopsis

In the Best Families

Chap. 3 "...the beast... stood facing me, concentrating with all its might on looking beautiful and dangerous."



Chap. 20 "...the plants were in splendid shape, especially those hard to handle, like Miltonias and Phalaenopsis.



Doberman

Chap. 6 "...repot some Miltonias today."



Vanda
(peetersiana)

Chap. 22 "Vanda peetersiana has a raceme 29 in. long."

Man Alive



Chap. 2

“ He took all his clothes off and jumped into a geyser at Yellowstone Park... Under the surface of that geyser... the pressure... keeps the temperature far above the boiling point.”

“ That seems conclusive,” Wolfe murmured. “Why do you now question it?”

“ Because he’s not dead. I saw him last week, here in New York, alive.”

Omit Flowers



Chap. 8 "Mr. Goodwin."

Recognizing the name, I opened my eyes. An attractive young woman in a blue summer negligee, with hair the color of maple syrup, was standing at the foot of my bed. There was plenty of daylight from the windows to get details.

"I didn't knock," she said, "because I didn't want to disturb anyone."

"You've disturbed me," I asserted..."



miltonia roezlii

Wolfe was in the intermediate room, inspecting some two-year Miltonia roezelis. The brief glance he gave me was as expected, he hates being interrupted up there.

Door to Death

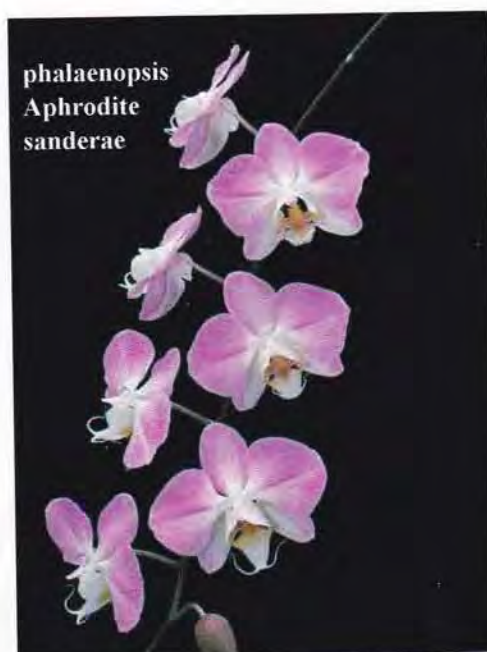
Chap. 2 “Wolfe... had already heard of this Andrew Krasicki, who had successfully crossed an *Odontoglossum cirrhosum* with an *Odontoglossum nobile veitchianum*...”



... he had a *Phalaenopsis Aphrodite* we might like to see. Wolfe grunted, “Species? I have eight.” “Oh, no.”

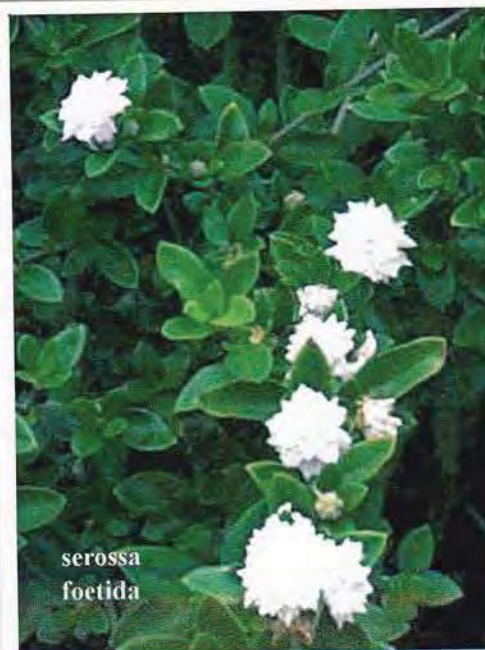
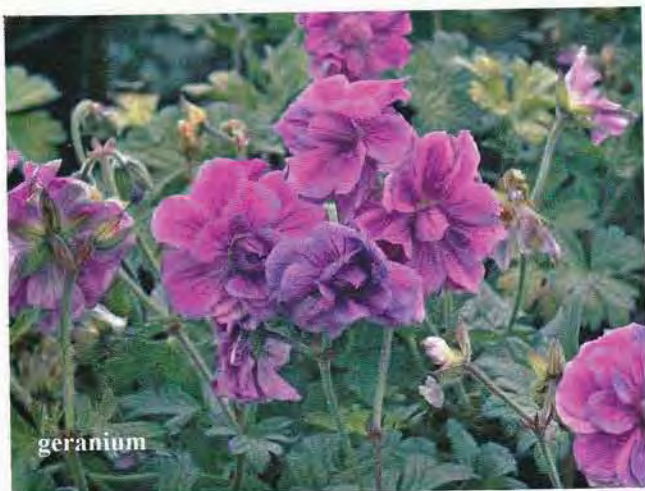
It was easy to tell from Krasicki’s tone of horticultural snobbery... that he really belonged. “Not species, and not dayana. *Sanderiana*.”

... “there was a sight I really enjoyed, Wolfe’s face as he gazed at the *Phalaenopsis Aphrodite sanderiana*... After a few more minutes coveting the *Phalaenopsis*...



Door to Death (Cont.)

...everything from violet geraniums to a thing in a tub with eight million little white flowers labeled *Serissa foetida*. I smelled it, got nothing, crushed one of the flowers with my fingers and then smelled that and then had no trouble understanding the foetida...



Of course... you know *Tibouchina semidecandra*, sometimes listed as *Pleroma mecanthrum* or *Pleroma grandiflora*."

"Certainly," Wolfe asserted.

I bet he had never heard of it before."



Door to Death (Cont.)

Chap. 9

“He spent about a third of the time finding out how they felt about plants and flowers, and actually got into an argument...about hairy begonias...”

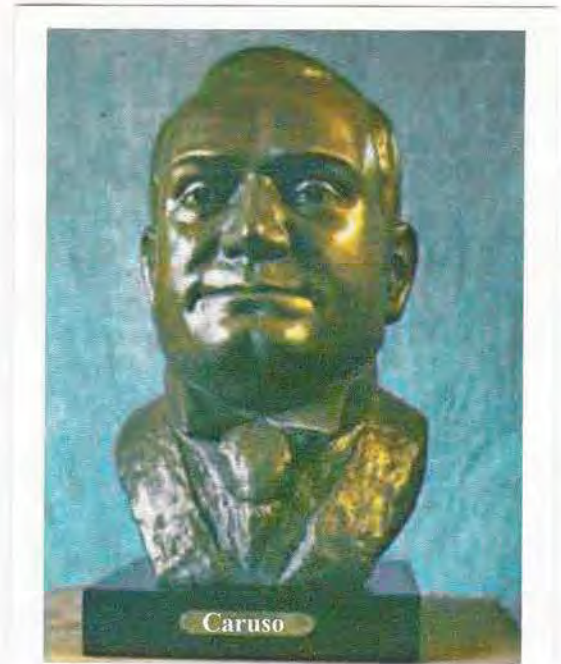


Chap. 10

“ He stopped abruptly, pushed his chair back, arose, muttered, “Good heavens, I forgot to tell Andy about those Miltonia seedlings,” and marched out.”



The Gun With Wings



Chap. 9

“ You could have managed easily to get the gun from the base of Caruso’s bust, and slipped it into your pocket without being seen.”

Bullet for One

Chap.13

... Inspector Cramer emerged... "What has Wolfe got now?"

"A dozen zygotetulum, ... a dozen renanthera... a dozen odontoglossums..."



Disguise for Murder

Chap. 1

“No sir, that’s not a brasso, it’s a laelia.”



“No, Madam, I doubt if you could grow that miltonia in a living room...”



Disguise for Murder (Cont.)

Chap. 2 First there was a chore to get done.
I found the three [of them], over by the
odontoglossum bench in the cool room..



first thing I knew I was alone there,
except for a guy at the north bench,
studying a row of dowianas...

Chap. 8 [We] found Wolfe in the cool room,
inspecting a bunch of dendrobiums for
damage from the invasion of the day before.



Murder By The Book

Chap. 4 "...at the back of the ... desk
was a vase of yellow daffodils...



daffodil

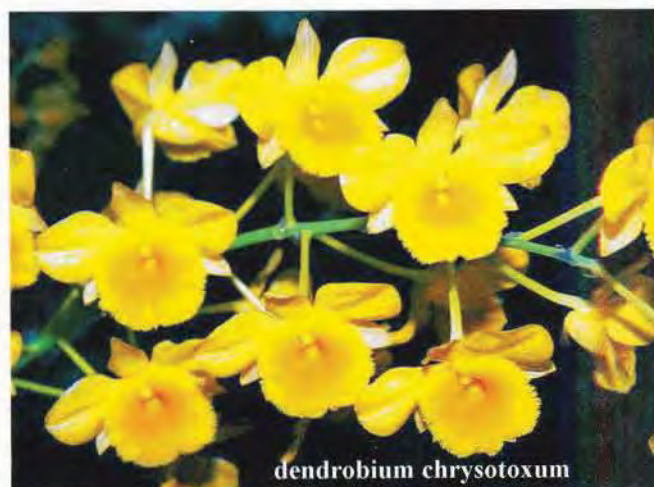


phalaenopsis

"...the Phalaenopsis
were in top bloom and
the Cattleyas were
splashing color all around."



cattleya



dendrobium chrysotoxum

"Wolfe was in the
potting room with Theodore,
transferring young
Dendrobium chrysotoxums
from fours to fives."

Murder By The Book (Cont.)

"... his yellow smock,
some half an acre in area,
was exactly the same color
as the daffodils..."



cypripedium (Lord Fisher)

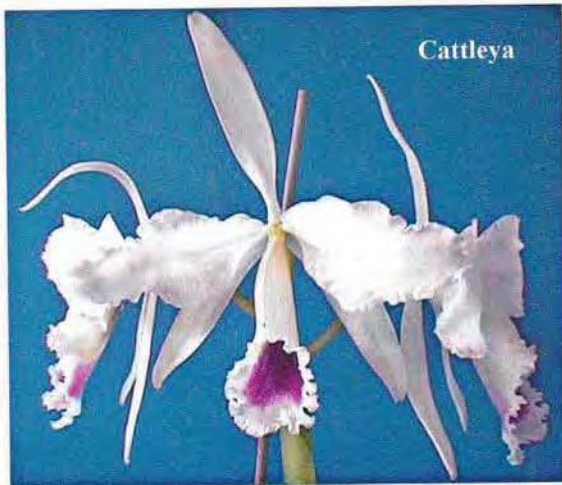
Chap. 7 " I'm going to need a lot of
orchids...I want a free hand."
"You won't get it.
No Cypripedium Lord Fisher,

no Dendrobium Cybele..."

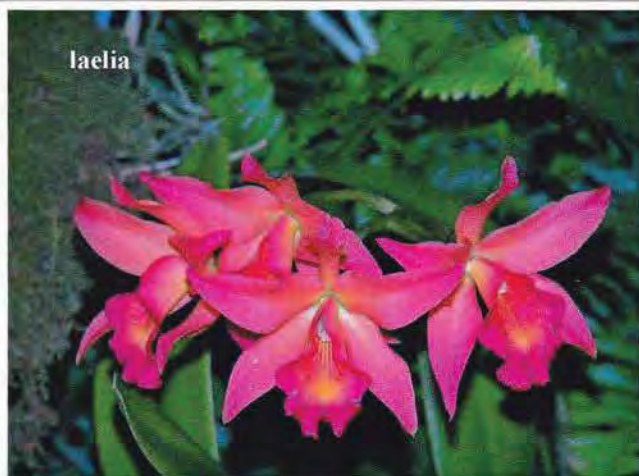


dendrobium (Cybele)

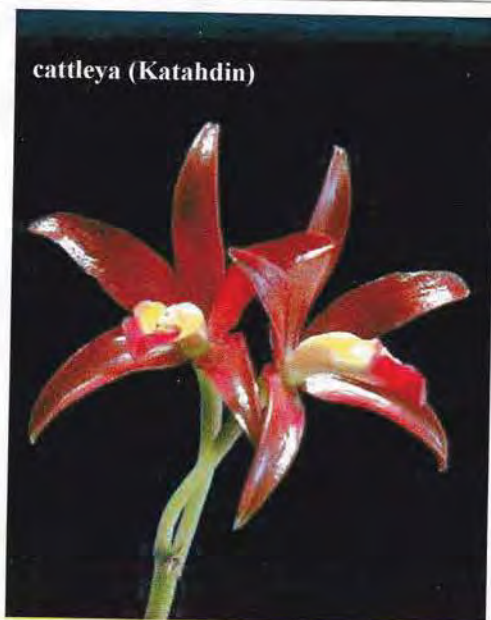
Murder By The Book (Cont.)



" I'll stick to Cattleyas, Brassos, and Laelios."



" I ... took a few extras, mostly Cattleyas Dionysius, Katahdin, and peetersi, ..."



Murder By The Book (Cont.)



Brassocattleyas Calypso, fournierae, and Nestor, and ...



Laeliocattleyas barbarossa, Carmencita and St. Gothard...the only one he tried to talk me out of was Calypso..."



Murder By The Book (Cont.)

Chap. 8 " ...caught her heel...teetered,
waved a bottle, and down came two pots of
Oncidium varicosum...
She showed great presence of mind,
[she] held onto the bottle."



Chap. 10 " They drank upstairs and
wrecked only two *Oncidium*s."

" Forbesi?"



" No.

Varicosum."



Murder By The Book (Cont.)

Chap. 17 " Two flowers are open
on a Cypripedium Minos."



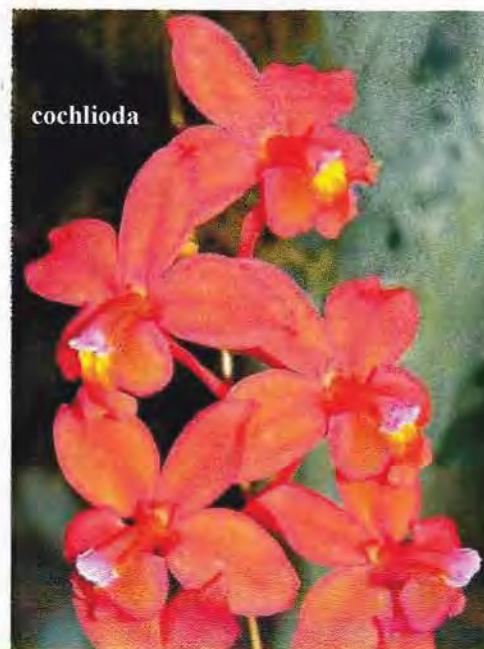
cypripedium (Minos)

Chap. 19 " Wolfe...was..inspecting
the roots of some Dendrobiums..."



dendrobium

Chap. 22 " ...he was ...frowning at
a Cochlioda hybrid that had nothing
whatever wrong with it..."



cochlioda

Home to Roost



MILTONIA WARSZEWICZII

Chap. 3 “I don’t like the atmosphere here... Orchids, for God’s sake!” Her hand darted to the bowl full to Miltonias, and with a flip of the wrist she sent it skidding along the slick surface and off to the floor.

The Cop-Killer

Chap. 1 The morning was shot anyway. with Wolfe sore and my chores not done.
Any one of three or four city employees would probably find out for me what kind of errand had taken a dick...
...to the Goldenrod Barber Shop unless it was something very special.



Chap. 2 " They killed a cop, or one of them did....Stuck a long pair of scissors in his back and got his pump."

The Squirt and the Monkey



Chap. 1 “There are few rooms I can’t take in at a glance, but that was one of them. Two huge TV cabinets, a monkey in a cage in the corner, chairs of all sizes and colors, rugs overlapping, a fireplace blazing away, the temperature around eighty—I gave it up...”



Prisoner's Base

Chap. 4 “ There was no point in going up to the plant rooms and starting a squabble, so I went down to the office and opened the morning mail and fiddled around with chores. Somewhat later, when I became aware that I was entering a germination date of *Cymbidium holfordianum* on the card of *Cymbidium pauwelsi*, I decided I wasn't in the mood for clerical work, returned things to the files, and sat and stared at my toes.”

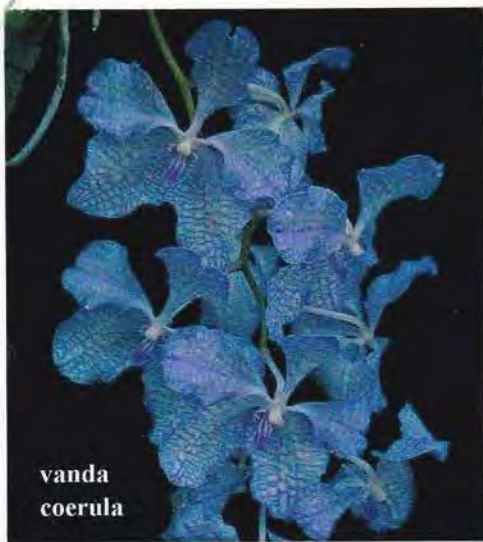


cymbidium (holfordianum)



cymbidium (pauwelsi)

The Golden Spiders



vanda
coerulea

Chap. 3 “Some guy on Long Island wanted to know if we could let him have three plants in bloom of *Vanda caerulea*. I told him we didn’t sell plants, and anyway that Vandas don’t bloom in May.



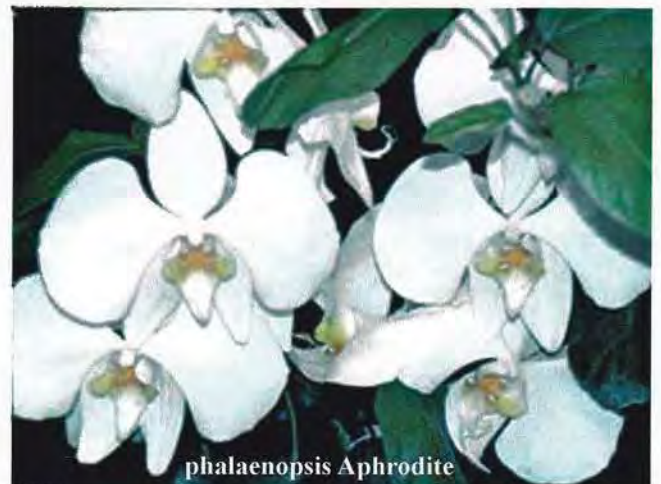
brassovola

...”this letter from Jordan is farcical. He knows quite well that I do not use *Brassovolas* in tri-generic crosses.

Chap. 6 I went up the three flights...to the warm room, where the *Miltonia roezlii* and *Phalaenopsis Aphrodite* were in full bloom.



Miltonia roezlii



phalaenopsis Aphrodite

The Golden Spiders (Cont.)

Chap. 6 "In the next room... only a few of the big showoffs, the Cattleyas and Laelias, had flowers, which was all right with me, and anyway the biggest show-off in the place, named Wolfe, was there..."



Chap. 6 "He wants to send flowers... and wanted to know if there would be any objection to orchids, provided that they are sprays of *Miltonia roezlii* alba, which are pure white and are very beautiful."



Invitation to Murder



Chap. 7 “ This is a paperweight, a heavy ball of green marble with a segment sliced off...Now I lift the paperweight with my right hand, and with my left hand pick up a paper to show you, but it slips from my hand and falls to the floor...Of course you bend over to retrieve it for me—...and when you do so I strike with the paperweight.”

The Zero Clue



Chap. 1 “ In the intermediate room Wolfe stood massively, with an Odontoglossum seedling in his hand, glaring at it, a mountain of cold fury... 'Thrips!' ”

“Get out!” He shook the thrips-infested seedling at me. “I don’t want it! That man couldn’t hire me for any conceivable job on any imaginable terms! Get out!”

I turned, prompt but dignified, and went. If he had thrown the seedling at me I would of course have dodged, and the fairly heavy pot would have sailed on by and crashed into a cluster of *Calanthes* in full bloom, and God only knew what Wolfe would have done then.”



This Won't Kill You



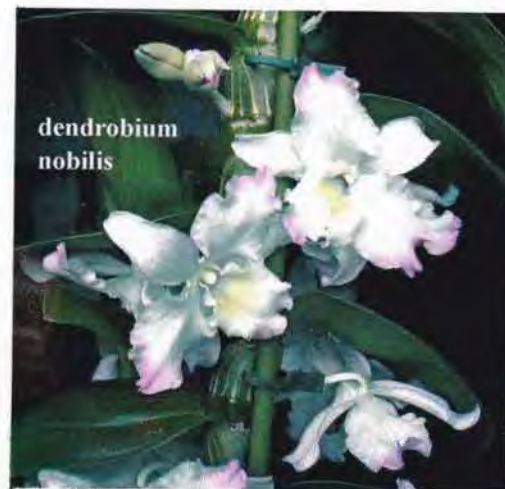
Chap. 7 "...he found out I bet a grand against us, and he threw it at me, and I brought him in here to explain, but he wouldn't believe me and he was going to tell you, and he got sore and came at me, and I grabbed the bat just to stop him, ...

The Black Mountain

Chap. 4 "...a chunky signor ...
with a red carnation in his lapel."



Chap. 6 "To think of Wolfe as I knew him best, seated in his custom-built chair behind his desk, prying the cap from a bottle of beer, a Laeliocattleya Jaquette sporting four flowers to his left and a spray of Dendrobium nobilis to his right; then to look at him tramping along in blue pants, yellow shirt, and brown jacket... I couldn't help being surprised that nobody turned to stare at him."



Before Midnight



Chap. 7 "Up in the plant rooms on the roof,
it was Cattleya Mossiae time."

"In the cool room... the Odontoglossums were
sporting their sprays."



"... in... the tropical room, the Phalaenopsis
were crowding the aisle with racemes two
feet long..."

Before Midnight (Cont.)

“...but at mossiae time the big show was in the third room. Of Wolfe’s fourteen varieties of mossiae my favorite was reineckiana, with its white, yellow, lilac, and violet.”

cattleya mossiae reineckiana



oncidium varicosum

“Look at this *Oncidium varicosum*,” he grumbled. Dry rot in April. It has never happened before.”

Chap. 20 “I would appreciate it if everybody [would] concentrate ... on how to wake me up in the morning without my resenting it. It may be that a bevy of beautiful maidens in pure silk yellow very sheer gowns, barefooted, singing *Oh What a Beautiful Morning* and scattering rose petals over me would do the trick but I’d have to try it.”

Miss Allie Rose (really)

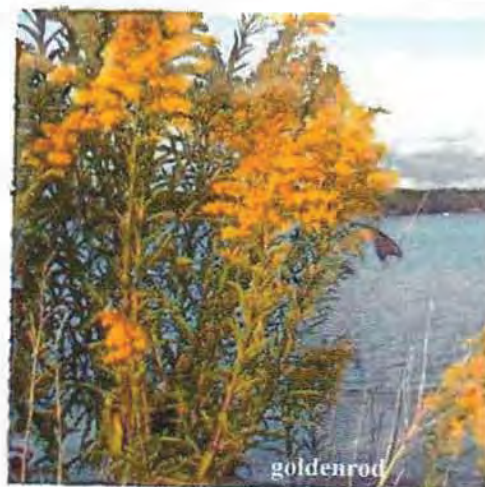


The Next Witness



Chap. 1 "...Tissot's Passion Flower,
which costs eighty bucks an ounce."

Chap. 3 "Let's go and pick
flowers... Goldenrod I know,



...but what are the other ones?"...
She reached for one of the blue flowers
and pulled it off with no stem...
"They're wild asters, just the color of my eyes."

Chap. 4. "I told Fritz that if the Queen of Hearts
phones she is to call Saul's number, and I told
Saul that you'd rather have a hour alone with
her than a blue orchid. You know Saul."



When A Man Murders

Chap. 2 ...they were downstairs in the Tulip Bar...



A man was there, spread-eagled on the floor near an open door, flat on his back...I went and squatted ...for a close-up of two objects on the floor...a GI sidearm, a .45...[and] a big wad of bathtowels...and [I] learned from...a scorched hole and powder black...it had been used to muffle the gun.



Die Like A Dog

Chap. 1 "What's that?" he snapped.
He was glaring at my companion."
"A dog."
"I see it is.
I'm in no mood for buffoonery.
Get it out of here."
"... There is sort of a problem.
His name is Nero...
of course I'll have to change it.
Ebony would do, or Jet, or Inky, or --"
"... He broke in.
"It's not a hound. It's a Labrador retriever..
Labradors... have a wider skull than any
other dog, for brain room."



You have your orchids,
and Fritz has his turtle,
and Theodore has his
parakeets up in the
potting room.

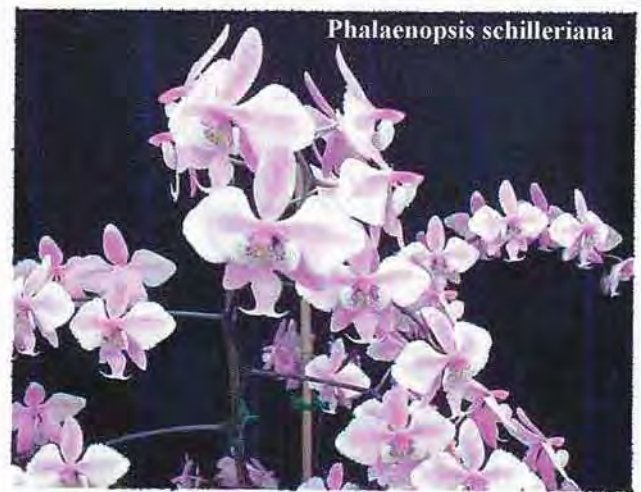


Chap. 3 "His name is Bootsy."
"Good heavens," Wolfe muttered.
"No other name?"



Might As Well Be Dead

Chap. 14 “How much Wolfe likes to show the orchids to people depends on who it is. Gushers he can stand, and even jostlers. The only ones he can’t bear are those who pretend they can tell a *Phalaenopsis stuartiana* from a *Phalaenopsis schilleriana* but can’t.”



And there is an ironclad rule that except for Fritz and me, and of course Theodore, who is there all the time, no one goes to the plant rooms for any other purpose than to look at orchids.



Window For Death



Chap. 7 “I...learned (a) that several pounds of chunks of dry ice, placed under the covering of a pneumonia patient near his chest, would certainly lower his temperature materially and probably dangerously; (b) ... it might be fatal, (c)...if the dry ice pressed against the body... it would burn the skin seriously and leave vivid marks; (d)...a rubber bag would be perfect, between the ice and the body, for prevention of burning...”

Immune To Murder



Chap. 2 “It is claimed that your eastern brook trout, *Salvelinus fontinalis*, is the most savory of all on earth...”

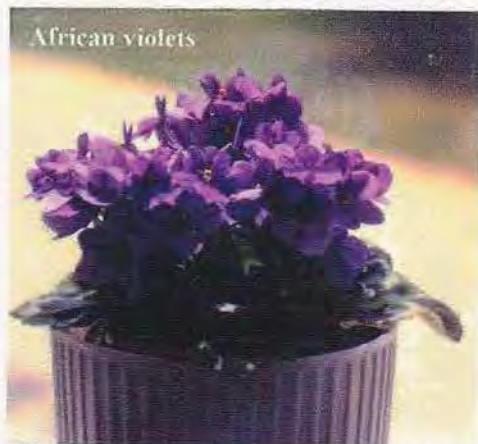
Too Many Detectives

Chap. 1 “I...stopped...to look down at a man on the floor...He was on his back, with his legs nearly straight making a V, and was dressed all right, including a necktie, only the necktie... was knotted tight around the skin of his neck.”



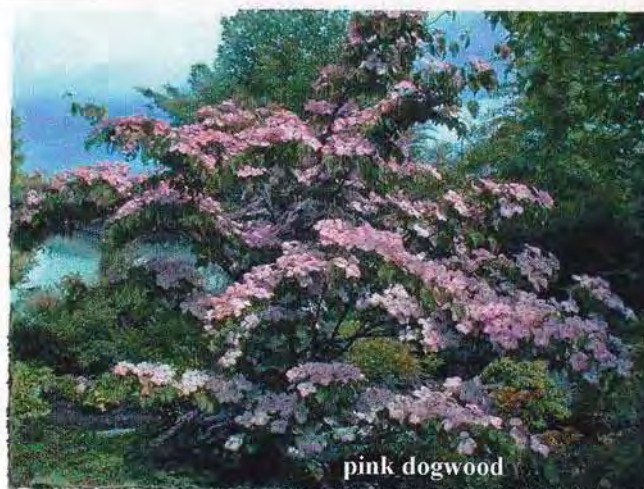
Chap. 2 “What killed him?”
“His necktie around his throat...he might have been calmed down first with a heavy brass ashtray. There was one there on the floor.”

If Death Ever Slept



Chap. 1 He had ten thousand orchids in his plant rooms on the rook; I had one African violet on my windowsill, and it wasn't feeling well.

Chap. 2 A dozen pink dogwoods in bloom, in big wooden tubs, were scattered around on Monday, ...



but on Wednesday they had... been replaced by rhododendrons covered with buds.

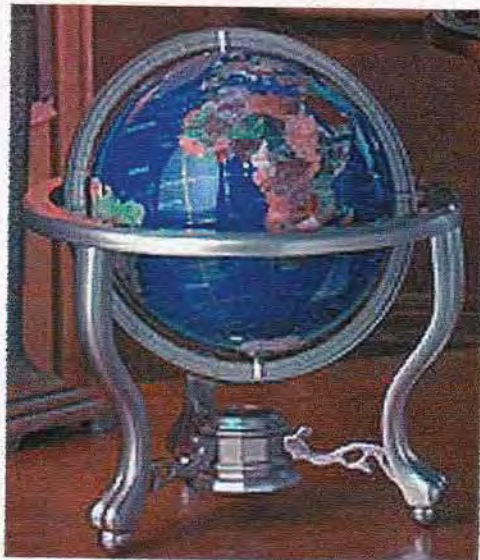


Chap. 8 "Because...he may not be the flower of knighthood, but he is my father, and besides, he pays my bills."



If Death Ever Slept (Cont.)

Chap. 9 They took time to greet me, which I appreciated, from two busy men with important matters to attend to like writing to Lewis Hewitt to tell him that a cross of *Cochlioda noezliana* with *Odontoglossum armainvillierense* was going to bloom and inviting him to come look at it.



Chap. 11 While we waited Wolfe looked around for something to take his mind off his misery, [and] settled on the big globe... Presumably he was picking a spot to head for, some remote island or one of the poles, if he decided to lam.

Christmas Party



I appreciate being able ...to...
look at ten thousand orchids,
especially the odontoglossoms.

Chap. 2 ...behind the bar was Santa Claus...
He was strictly traditional, cut, color, size,
mask, and all, except that the hand grasping
the champagne bottle wore a white glove...

...a thin falsetto that didn't match his size...
(Santa Claus, where is your [glass]?
But I suppose you can't drink through that mask.).

... there on the floor was Santa Claus,
but only the outside of him. He had molted.
Jacket, breeches, mask, wig...



Chap. 3. "There's a book... in your room.
Will you bring it down, please?"

I saw a book...
... and lying on top of it was
a pair of white cotton gloves.

I gawked.

Easter Parade

Chap. 1 "Nothing doing. If you wanted me to hook something really worthwhile...I might consider it, but I am not an orchid snatcher...Maybe I am not unique, but the orchid must be."



It is... a flamingo pink Vanda-both petals and sepals true pink, with no tints, spots or edgings... I have been hybridizing for a pink Vanda for years, but have come no closer than the rose-lilac of *peetersiana* or the magenta of *sandarae*."

Vanda (peetersiana)



Vanda sandarae

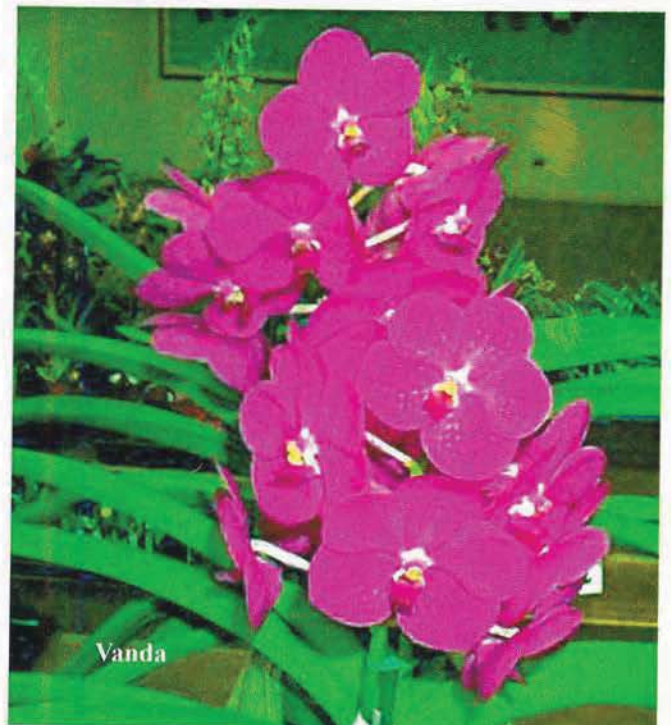


Easter Parade (Cont.)

Chap. 2 “ There would be a lot of bosoms sporting orchids in that stampede, from Cattleyas to Calanthes...

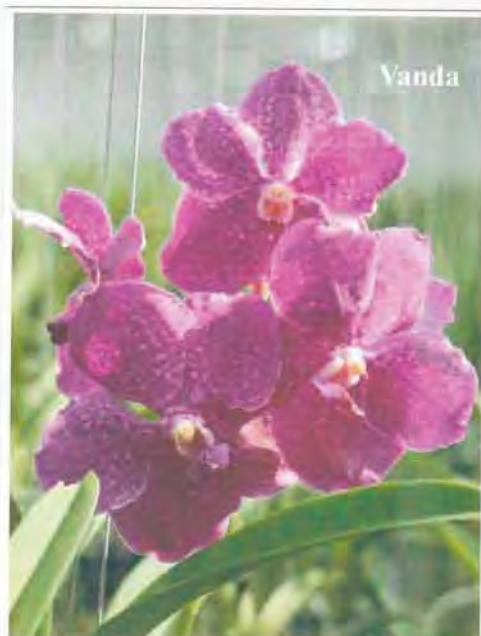


“Once I thought that I had spotted my target, but... I saw that her orchid spray wasn't Vanda, but Phalaenopsis. Then suddenly there she was... drooping below her left shoulder was a ten-inch spray of glowing pink...”

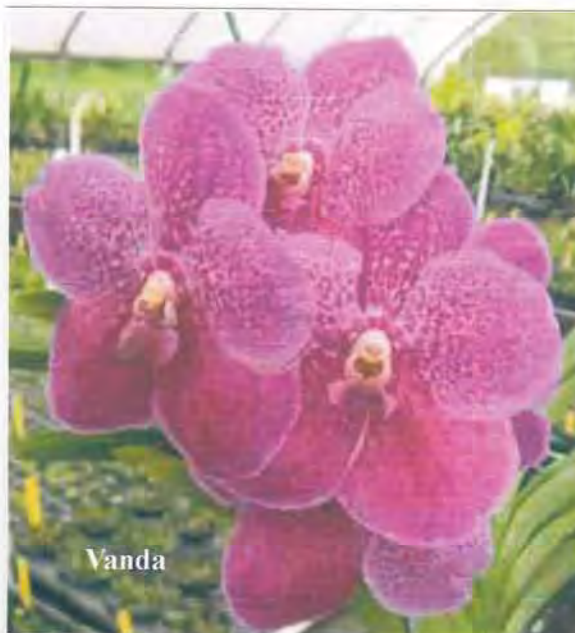


Easter Parade (Cont.)

Chap. 3 ...seeing Inspector Cramer through the one-way glass panel, I stepped into the office to see that the spray of Vanda wasn't on view and to tell Wolfe who the caller was. He put down the book he was reading and growled.



Chap. 8 If you would like to see the plant of the flamingo-pink Vanda, ... and I'll arrange it. It has a spot all to itself on a bench up in the plant room.



Chap. 4 "He probably has a couple of hundred million left *and* that pink Vanda plant. It's too bad you can't fill his order. The way it stacks up your best move is to hide the orchids."



It came in advance to Bynoe's check in payment of Wolfe's bill ...I have no proof that Wolfe dropped any hints...about the Vanda, but I wasn't with him when he visited Bynoe's greenhouse, but I am entitled to my opinion.

Fourth of July Picnic

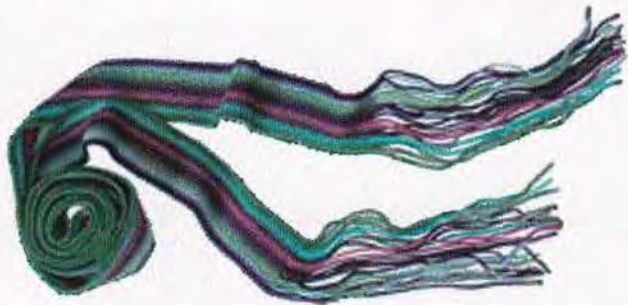


renanthera imschootiana

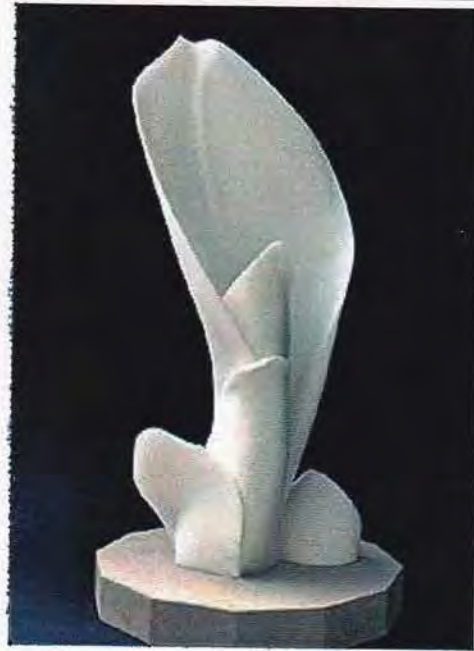
Chap. 5 “ This is more like it....I’ve had all the humiliation I can stand. Jumping out of my skin every time the phone rang. Did you notice how quickly I answered your ring upstairs? Afraid, by heaven, afraid to go into the tropical room to look over the *Renanthera imschootiana*! Now we know where we are.”

Murder Is No Joke

Chap. 2 Cramer found the place on page four and consulted it. Okay. You heard a groan and a crash and rustles. But there was a blow. She *was* hit in the back of the head with a chunk of marble, a paperweight...



and then a scarf was tied around her throat...



Chap.4 "Confound it. Bring me the records on *Laelia gouldiana*."

Chap. 4 "...[Wolfe] pointed to a picture on the wall to his left behind him—a pretty waterfall. "You know about that."... "The waterfall covered a hole in the wall... the hole was covered by nothing, and you could not only see through, but also hear through."

Champagne For One

Chap. 1 "No only did he orchids have to be fed, but only that week Wolfe had bought a Coelogyne from Burma for eight hundred bucks and that was just routine."



Mister Hewitt is coming this eventng to bring a Dendrobium and look at the Renantheras. You said you would be here.



Champagne For One (Cont.)

Chap. 10 ...in the cool room, long panicles of
Odontoglossom, yellow, rose, white with spots...



...Phalaenopsis splashed pinks and greens
and browns clear to the glass above...



...Miltonia hybrids and...



...and in the intermediate room the
Cattleyas were grandstanding all
over the place as always.

Plot It Yourself



Chap. 7

“Confound these interruptions.”
“We were in the middle of a letter to Lewis Hewitt, describing the results of a cross between *C. gaskelliana alba* with *C. mossiae wagneri*.”

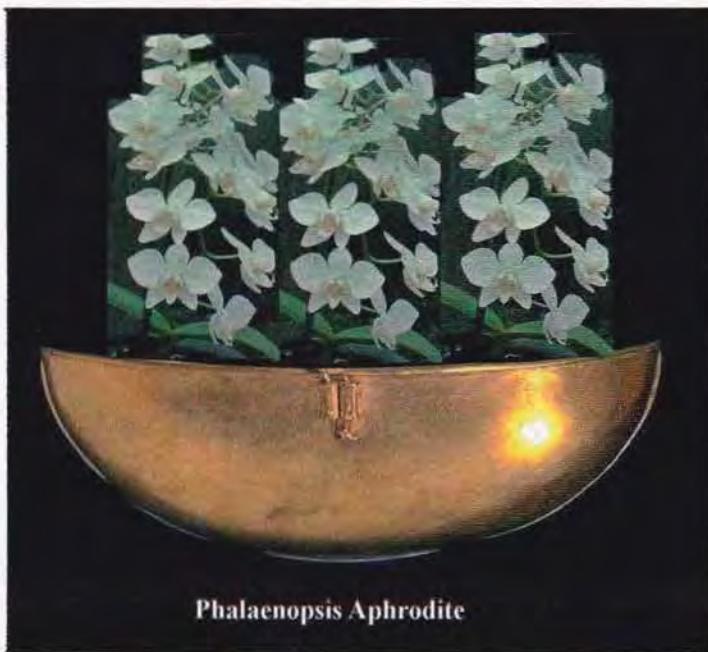


Chap. 9

“He had a cluster of *Phalaenopsis Aphrodite* in his hand, and he got a vase from the shelf, took it to the kitchen for water, brought it back, put the stem in, and place it on his desk. That’s the only hard work he does around the office.”



Poison a la Carte



Phalaenopsis Aphrodite

Chap. 2 In the center was a low gilt bowl...filled with clusters of Phalaenopsis Aphrodite, donated by Wolfe, cut by him that afternoon from some of his most treasured plants

Hewitt ...said that he had never seen Phalaenopsis better grown

Chap. 4 "Of course I knew about his reputation, but he was backing *Jack in the Pulpit* and they were about to start casting,...and if a girl expects to have a career, she has to be sociable...



Jack-in-the-Pulpit

Method Three for Murder



Chap. 2 “ ...she bet me fifty dollars ...that something dangerous could happen in a cab that couldn’t happen anywhere else...”



“ If she could have died of natural causes—“

“ No. She had been stabbed. There was a knife, the handle of a knife...”

The Rodeo Murder



Chap. 2 “ The rope had been wound around his throat...”



“ If he had been conked first, with what?...One of those three-foot stainless steel rods, for staking plants, would have been just the thing, and one on top was lying across the others.”

Too Many Clients

Chap. 1 "I have seen quite a few rooms where people had gone all out, but that topped them all.... The first impression was of silk and skin. The silk, mostly red but some pale yellow, was on the walls and ceiling and couches.



that took up much of the wall space...



The skin was on the girls and women in the pictures...



... Since yellow was Wolfe's pet color it was too bad he hadn't come along."

Too Many Clients

Chap. 8 "When he came down from the plant rooms at eleven o'clock he put the day's orchid selection, *Calanthe veitchii sanhurstiana*, in the vase on his desk, circled to his chair and sat, glanced at his desk calendar, and looked through the morning crop of mail..."



*Calanthe
veitchii
sanhurstiana*



Lycaste delicatissima

Chap. 15 "The sound came of the elevator and Wolfe entered, said good morning, went to his desk, and asked if there was any word from Hewitt about the *Lycaste delicatissima*. True to form."

The Final Deduction

Chap. 2 “That day’s orchids were *Miltonia vexillaria*, brought by him as usual when he came down from the plant rooms at eleven o’clock.”



Miltonia vexillaria

Chap. 3 “Wolfe had come down from the plant rooms and gone to his desk, put a spray of *Oncidium marshallianum* in the vase, torn yesterday from his desk calendar, and gone through the mail, and was dictating a long letter to an orchid collector in Guatemala. He hates to be interrupted when he’s doing something really important...”



oncidium marshallianum

Chap. 6 “But Wolfe had a few difficulties... Soap that smelled like tuberosas (he said),...



tuberosa aesculapia



geranium

...and he uses geranium.”

The Final Deduction (Cont.)

Chap. 6

"Dendrobium chrysotoxum for Miss Gillard and Laelia Purpurata for Doctor Vollmer. Tomorrow."

"Right, and Sitassia readia for you and Transcriptum underwoodum for me."
I hit the keys.



Chap. 11

"... Wolfe entered, a spray of Miltonia roezlii in his left hand and the Sunday Times under his right arm. He takes his copy of the Times with him to the plant rooms so he won't have to stop off at his room on the way down to the office. Labor-saving device."



Eeny Meeny Murder Mo



Chap. 1 "I was standing there...glaring down at the necktie on Nero Wolfe's desk...brown silk with little yellow curlicues...My list of functions from confidential assistant to errand boy is a mile long, but it does not include valeting."

A big chunk of jade which Wolfe used for a paperweight, which had been on his desk... Around her neck was Wolfe's necktie... Probably she was knocked out first with that paperweight, but it was the necktie that stopped her breathing...

"Do you dare to suggest that she was strangled with my necktie?"

"Yes, sir."

"This is unsupportable."

"Yes, sir."

"I will not accept it."

He was staring down at the necktie, with his jaw set and his mouth so tight he had no lips.



Death of a Demon



Chap. 6 "He went first to the front of the desk to put a spray of orchids in the vase, *Odontoglossum pyramus*, then circled around to his chair."

Counterfeit for Murder



Chap. 5 ... "a group of *Miltonia Roezlii* were sporting more than 50 racemes on four feet of bench. Best crop of *Miltonia Wolfe* (and *Theodore*) had ever had. The display is always harder to believe when the snow is dancing on the sloping glass overhead."

Gambit

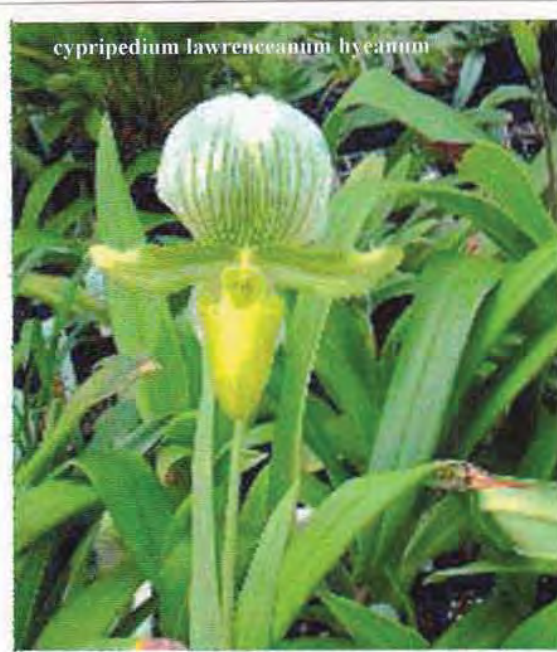


Laelia gouldiana

Chap. 6

“I was at my desk at eleven o’clock when the sound came of the elevator, which Wolfe always uses and I never do. He entered, with the day’s desk orchids as usual, said good morning, went and put the branch of *Laelia gouldiana* in the vase, sat, glanced through the morning mail, focused on me, and demanded, ‘Where is she?’ “

The Mother Hunt



Chap. 4

“...I’ll buy you lunch. I’ll have an orchid in my buttonhole, a small one, white and green... Nothing urgent... Just to tell you that I’m taking a *Cypripedium lawrenceanum hyeanum*—one flower. To wear... I’ll be there in twenty minutes, with no hat, a paper bag in my hand, and a white and green orchid in my lapel.”

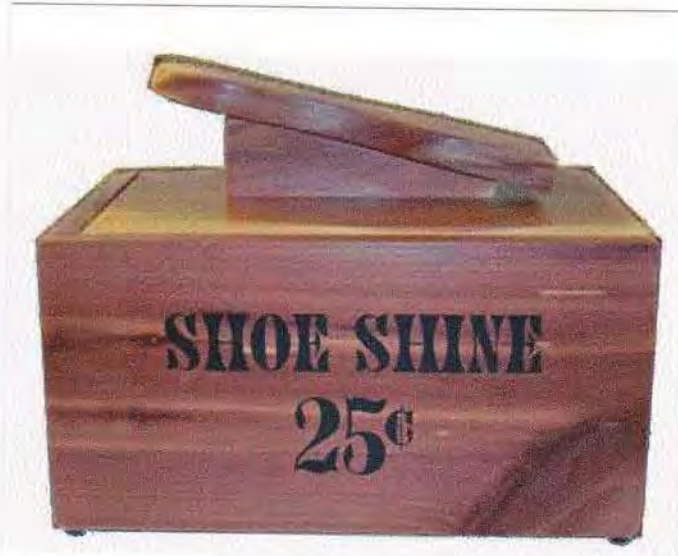
“Not an *orchid*. Men don’t wear orchids.”

“I do, and I’m a man. Do you mind?”

“I won’t know until I see you.”

“That’s the spirit. All right, I’m off.”

Kill Now – Pay Later



Chap. 1 “Pete came three days a week...after he had finished his rounds in an office building on Eighth Avenue. Wolfe always gave him a dollar...and I only gave him a quarter, but he gave my shoes as good a shine as he did Wolfe’s.”



“...a thing on his desk...a big hunk of polished petrified wood...And at the back of his head, at the base of his skull, something smooth and round had hit him hard.”

Murder is Corny



Dendrobium nobile

Chap. 2 “I went to Wolfe’s desk and got the vase of orchids, *Dendrobium nobile* that day, removed the flowers and put them on my desk pad, went to her, got fingers under her chin and forced her head up, and sloshed her good. The vase holds two quarts. “



oncidium



laeliocattleya

Chap. 4 “ She was in no hurry to get back, but she had never seen the orchids, and on one alive could just breeze on by those benches, with everything from the neat little *Oncidiums* to the big show-offs like the *Laeliocattleyas*.

Blood Will Tell



Chap. 1

“He had put a spray of Cymbidium Doris in the vase on his desk and got his personal seventh of a ton disposed in his oversize custom-made chair, and was scowling at the dust jacket of a book...”

A Right To Die

Chap. 5 “He spoke as he entered. Sometimes he doesn’t, He just tramps down the hall. The fact that he spoke, and even thanked me for taking his hat and coat, showed that he had come not to claim but to ask. When he entered the office, naturally he didn’t offer a hand, since he knows that Wolfe is not a shaker, but before he lowered his fanny onto the red leather chair he uttered a polite greeting and actually made a try at being sociable by asking,

“And how are the orchids?”

Wolfe’s brows went up.

“Passable, thank you. A pot of *Miltonia roezlii* has fourteen scapes.”

“Is that so?”



miltonia roezlii



phalaenopsis Aphrodite

Chap. 9 “It was useless to try to start a conversation until he had put a spray of *Phalaenopsis Aphrodite* in the vase and glanced through the mail...

...I suspect that he always hopes to find a letter from a collector in Honduras or somewhere, saying that he has found a clear solid blue orchid and is sending it to Wolfe by air, no charge, to show his appreciation for something or other.”



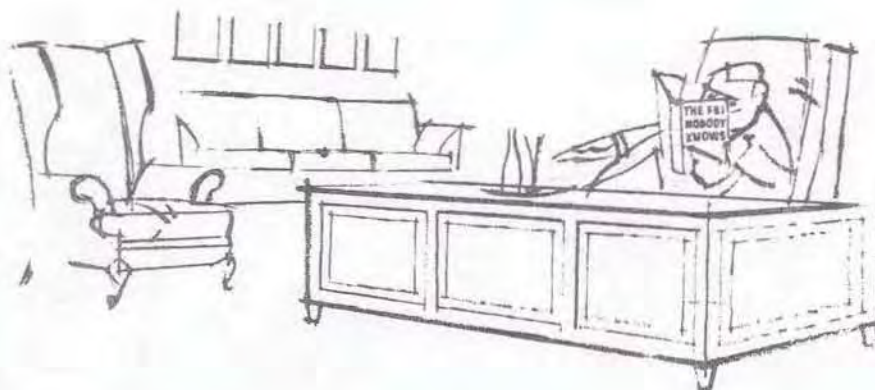
A Right To Die (Cont.)

Chap. 12 “Going to my desk, I had a splendid view of his broad burly shoulders and his king-size fanny, motionless for a good three minutes until Wolfe entered, stopped two steps in and glanced. Cramer wheeled and went to the red leather chair...



... Wolfe switched the glare to me, and as he went to his desk I said, “There wasn’t time to buzz you, he just came.” He put a raceme of Vanda suavis in the vase, sat, and started looking through the mail, no hurry. “Take your time,” Cramer said icily, “Take my time. We’ve got all day...”

The Doorbell Rang



miltoniopsis sanderae

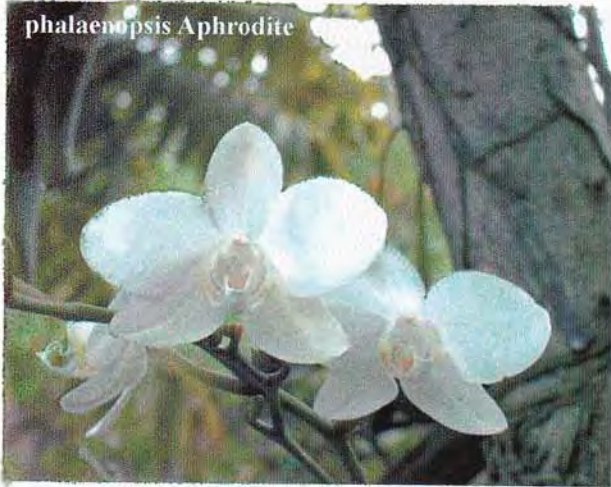
Chap. 9 "Mr. Hewitt has bloomed four crosses between *Miltonia sanderae* and *Odontoglossum pyramus*."



odontoglossum pyramus

The Doorbell Rang (Cont.)

phalaenopsis Aphrodite



Chap. 11 "...he would be able to include only twelve Phalaenopsis Aphrodite...

and no Oncidium flexuosum...:

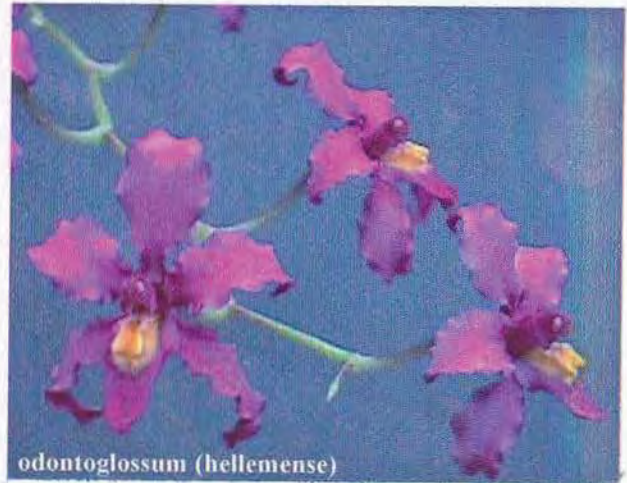


Oncidium flexuosum



Death of a Doxy

Chap. 4 “ He entered, in his hand the daily orchids for his desk—a panicle of *Odontoglossum hellemense*,



which according to the records I keep, is a cross of *harvengtense* and *crispum*.”

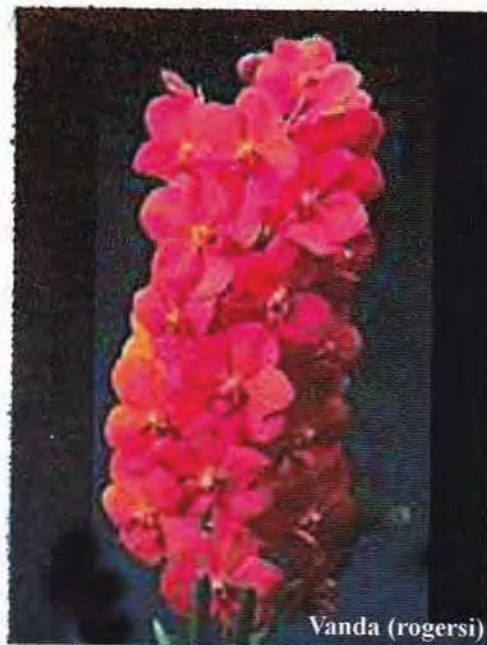


Death of a Doxy (Cont.)

Archie Goodwin
representing
Nero Wolfe
Private Investigator
257 West 35th St. New York 5, New York
Klondike 5 - 0173

Chap. 7 “ ...like the card...my name in the middle and Nero Wolfe’s name and address and phone number in smaller type at the bottom—but I had added something...”

Chap. 11 “ I was settled in a comfortable chair in a bedroom...Julie Jaquette, in the bed, was not stretched out; she was propped up against three pillows... It was a nice big room, made even nicer by the clusters of *Vanda rogersi* which I had brought...



Vanda (rogersi)

Death of a Doxy (Cont.)

Chap. 16 "It helps, at a time like that, to have something to do that needs only one small corner of your mind, like entering on cards such items as the results to date of a cross between ...

Odontoglossum crispo-harryanum x *aireworthii* ...



... or *Miltonia vexillaria* x *roezlii*.



The Father Hunt

laelia (schroederi)



laelia ashworthiana



Chap. 2 “...I had to be careful about bumps and jerks. Not on account of Wolfe, since I had a theory that jostles were good for him, but because of the pots...in the trunk... new Laelia crosses of schroederi and ashworthiana. The were worth a couple of grand...but the important point was that nobody in the world but Hewitt and now Wolfe had any.”

Chap. 7 “...Wolfe, with the receiver in one hand, was adjusting the spray of Miltonia hellemense in the vase on his desk with the other.”



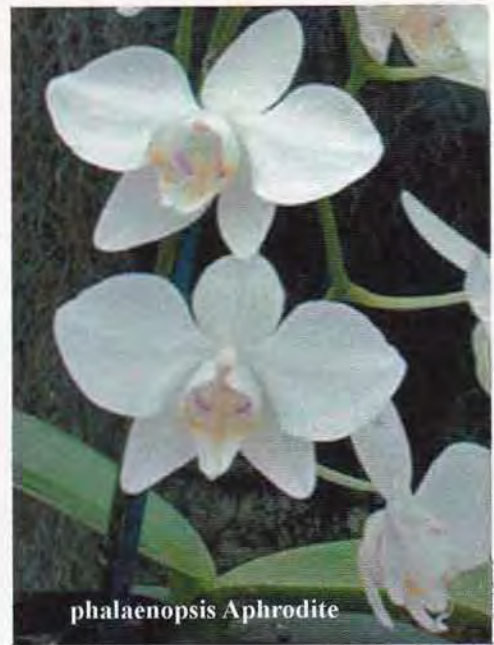
miltonia(hellemense)



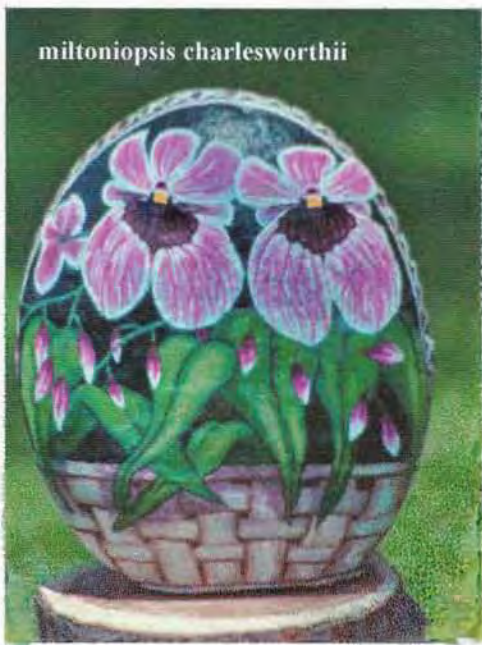
Chap. 12 “Miss Sebor...if I knew what color you like I would buy you ten dozen roses..
...Green with black borders.”

The Father Hunt (Cont.)

Chap. 13 "We'll send her some sprays of Phalaenopsis Aphrodite. They have never been finer."



phalaenopsis Aphrodite



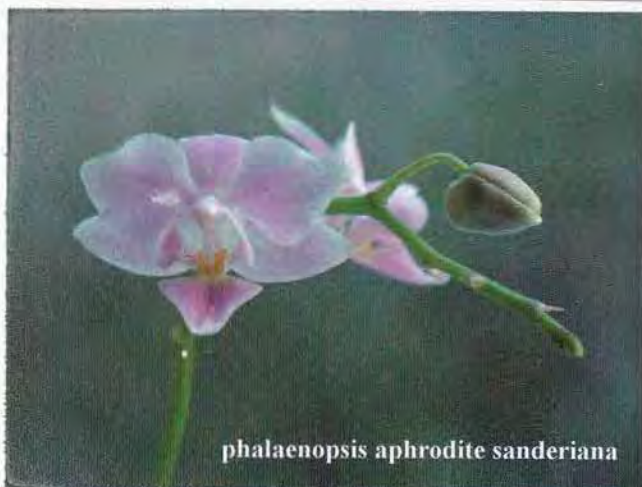
miltoniopsis charlesworthii

Chap. 14 "This Miltonia charlesworthii germination card has conflicting entries."
"Is this card really off?" "No. Stay here."
He turned to Theodore."

"Those Odontoglossum pyramus aren't ready for sevens. Put them in sixes."



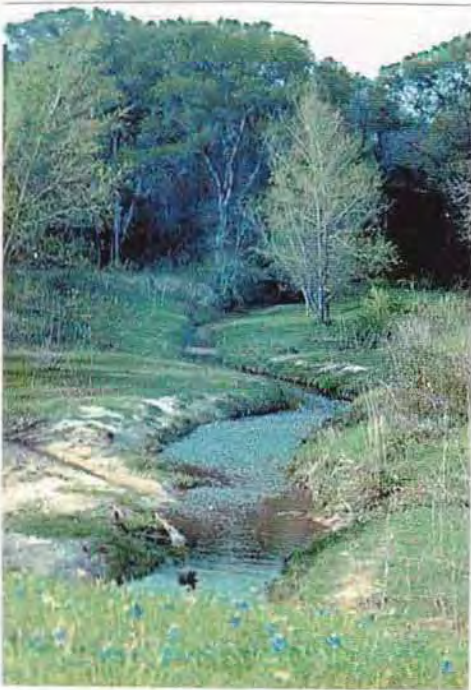
odontoglossum(pyramus)



phalaenopsis aphrodite sanderiana

"Phalaenopsis Aphrodite sanderiana... We'll send some to... Dorothy Sebor, and I'll go up and get them now. I intended to bring them down but those intruders came. Also I brought none for my desk."

Death Of A Dude



Chap. 1 “...for anyone who is fed up with people and noise, a favorite spot could be Lily Rowan’s cabin clearing. I admit there is a little noise, Berry Creek making a fuss about the rocks that won’t move.”

Chap. 2 “I knew Blue Grouse Ridge... Lily and I had been there... for young blue grouse which, about ten weeks old and grubbed almost exclusively on berries, were as good eating as anything Fritz had ever served.”



Chap. 5 “...a wild animal scooted out and... bounded hell-bent for the brush, and he asked, “Native hare?” That depends on whether a jackrabbit is a hare... They are not palatable.”



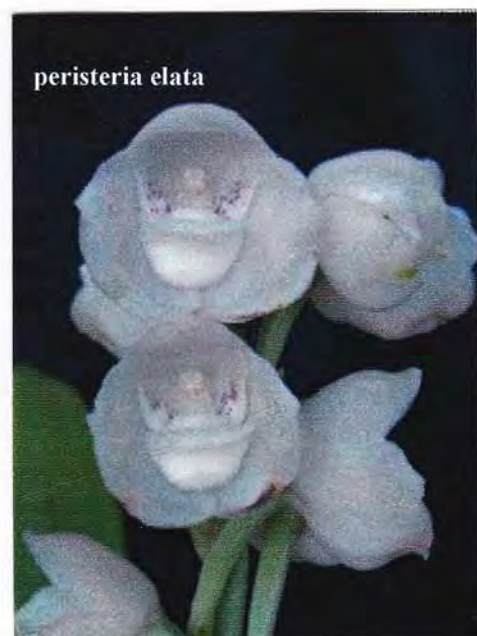
Please Pass The Guilt

Chap. 2 "... the sound of the elevator came at eleven o'clock, and when Wolfe entered and told me good morning and went to put a cluster of *Acampe pachyglossa* in the vase on his desk...

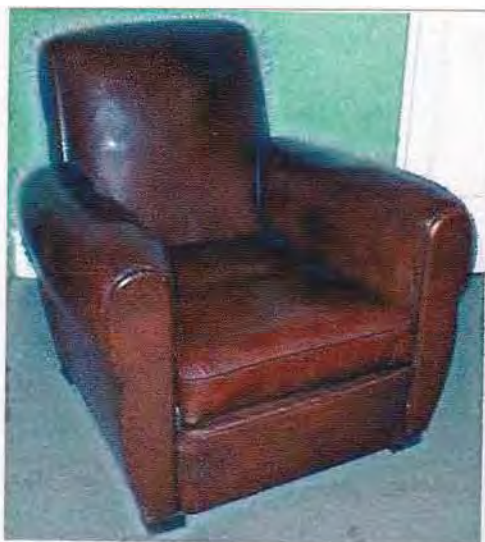


Chap. 3 "He asked what kind of flowers would be preferred... my guest would be a man from whom I hoped to get some information... so make it four-leaf clovers for luck."

Chap. 4 "The Sunday... routine was different... Wolfe's morning with the orchids could be ... from twenty minutes to four hours... When he showed a little after eleven, he had ... a fourteen-inch raceme of *Peristeria elata*...



Please Pass The Guilt (Cont.)



Chap. 6 “[He] rated the red leather chair... he was the president... and, being close to seventy, he had seniority. For the others I had placed two rows of yellow chairs...”



Chap. 11 “The box contained a cluster of *Broughtonia sanguinea*... picked by Wolfe, who wouldn’t even let me cut his orchids... On the way out I stopped to apologize to the two pots of *Broughtonia sanguinea*.”

Chap. 15 “...how were we going to wrap it up? When Wolfe came down from the plant rooms, we hadn’t got very far ... He... put a raceme of *Dendrobium chrysotoxum* in the vase... sat and sent his eyes around, and asked,

“Have you a program?”

“Sure,” I said. “Just what you’re expecting, ask you for instructions.”



dendrobium chrysotoxum

A Family Affair



Chap. 11 "...at that moment I wouldn't have known an orchid from a ragweed."



Chap. 13 "Speaking of odds, if florist shops had been open I would have brought a thousand red roses."

A Family Affair

Chap. 15 "A piece of thin paper... with writing on it in ink... I took a picture with my best camera to reproduce here:

Orrie Cather
127 E. 94

Chap. 16 "...from his inside breast pocket Saul's hand came out with something that was not to be expected since Orrie didn't smoke: an aluminum cigar tube, Don Pedro."

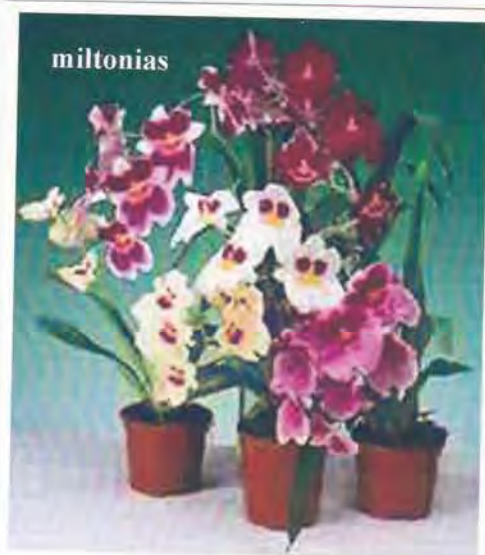
Don Pedro

Frame-up For Murder

Chap. 1 "In the tropical room I took the side aisle for a look at the pink Vanda that Wolfe had been offered six grand for..."



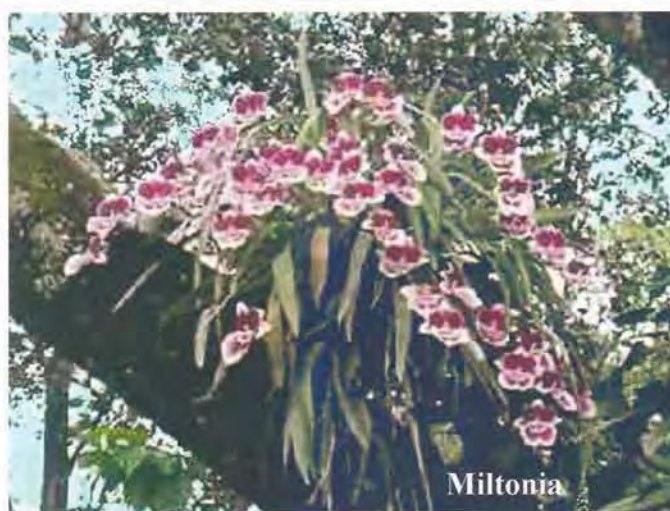
Pink Vanda



miltonias

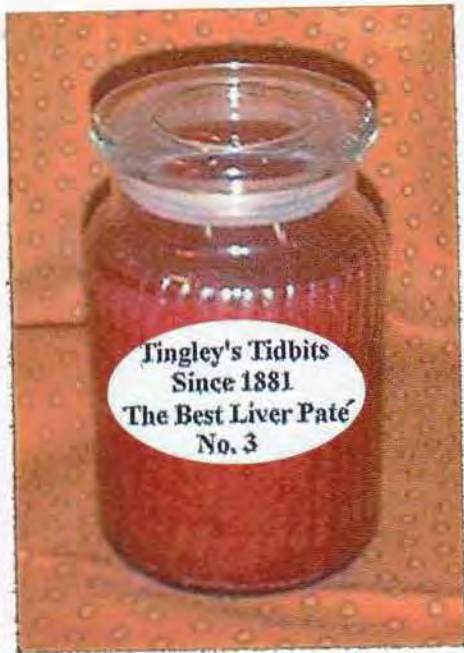
...and in the intermediate room, I slowed down as I passed a bench of my favorites, Miltonia hybrids.

...I cut off a raceme of Miltonia and took it along. Orchids are good for girls, whether they have problems or not.



Miltonia

Bitter End



Chap. 1 "I reached for the jar, took a look at the contents, and sniffed it. I inspected the label. It was small and to the point."



"I straightened up and collected a few more items with my eyes... A knife with a long, thin blade and a black composition handle... a cylinder of metal... It was Tingley's paperweight."



Assault on a Brownstone



Chap. 1...she turned to go, and then turned back, opened the black leather handbag, and took out a package wrapped in brown paper with a string around it.

“Keep this for me, Buster,” she said. “Some nosy cop might take it on himself. Come on, it won’t bite. And don’t open it. Can I trust you not to open it?”