

Dope

by

Sax Rohmer

Web-Books.Com

Dope

1.	A Message For Irvin	3
2.	The Apartments Of Kazmah.....	7
3.	Kazmah.....	11
4.	The Closed Door.....	14
5.	The Door Is Opened.....	19
6.	Red Kerry.....	25
7.	Further Evidence	32
8.	Kerry Consults The Oracle	35
9.	A Packet Of Cigarettes.....	41
10.	Sir Lucien's Study Window	44
11.	The Drug Syndicate.....	48
12.	The Maid Of The Masque.....	54
13.	A Chandu Party.....	59
14.	In The Shade Of The Lonely Palm	64
15.	Metamorphosis	69
16.	Limehouse.....	73
17.	The Black Smoke	79
18.	The Dream Of Sin Sin Wa	84
19.	The Traffic.....	89
20.	Kazmah's Methods.....	94
21.	The Cigarettes From Buenos Ayres	98
22.	The Strangle-Hold.....	103
23.	Chief Inspector Kerry Resigns.....	107
24.	To Introduce 719.....	112
25.	Night-Life Of Soho	116
26.	The Moods Of Mollie.....	122
27.	Crown Evidence.....	126
28.	The Gilded Joss.....	131
29.	Doubts And Fears	136
30.	The Fight In The Dark.....	140
31.	The Story Of 719	145
32.	On The Isle Of Dogs.....	149
33.	Chinese Magic	155
34.	Above And Below.....	159
35.	Beyond The Veil	164
36.	Sam Tuk Moves.....	167
37.	Seton Pasha Reports	171
38.	The Song Of Sin Sin Wa	173
39.	The Empty Wharf.....	177
40.	Coil Of The Pigtail	180
41.	The Finding Of Kazmah	185
42.	A Year Later	189
43.	The Story Of The Crime	194

1. A Message For Irvin

Monte Irvin, alderman of the city and prospective Lord Mayor of London, paced restlessly from end to end of the well-appointed library of his house in Prince's Gate. Between his teeth he gripped the stump of a burnt-out cigar. A tiny spaniel lay beside the fire, his beady black eyes following the nervous movements of the master of the house.

At the age of forty-five Monte Irvin was not ill-looking, and, indeed, was sometimes spoken of as handsome. His figure was full without being corpulent; his well-groomed black hair and moustache and fresh if rather coarse complexion, together with the dignity of his upright carriage, lent him something of a military air. This he assiduously cultivated as befitting an ex-Territorial officer, although as he had seen no active service he modestly refrained from using any title of rank.

Some quality in his brilliant smile, an oriental expressiveness of the dark eyes beneath their drooping lids, hinted a Semitic strain; but it was otherwise not marked in his appearance, which was free from vulgarity, whilst essentially that of a successful man of affairs.

In fact, Monte Irvin had made a success of every affair in life with the lamentable exception of his marriage. Of late his forehead had grown lined, and those business friends who had known him for a man of abstemious habits had observed in the City chophouse at which he lunched almost daily that whereas formerly he had been a noted trencherman, he now ate little but drank much.

Suddenly the spaniel leapt up with that feverish, spider-like activity of the toy species and began to bark.

Monte Irvin paused in his restless patrol and listened.

"Lie down!" he said. "Be quiet."

The spaniel ran to the door, sniffing eagerly. A muffled sound of voices became audible, and Irvin, following a moment of hesitation, crossed and opened the door. The dog ran out, yapping in his irritating staccato fashion, and an expression of hope faded from Irvin's face as he saw a tall fair girl standing in the hallway talking to Hinkes, the butler. She wore soiled Burberry, high-legged tan boots, and a peaked cap of distinctly military appearance. Irvin would have retired again, but the girl glanced up and saw him where he stood by the library door. He summoned up a smile and advanced.

"Good evening, Miss Halley," he said, striving to speak genially--for of all of his wife's friends he liked Margaret Halley the best. "Were you expecting to find Rita at home?"

The girl's expression was vaguely troubled. She had the clear complexion and bright eyes of perfect health, but to-night her eyes seemed over-bright, whilst her face was slightly pale.

"Yes," she replied; "that is, I hoped she might be at home."

"I am afraid I cannot tell you when she is likely to return. But please come in, and I will make inquiries."

"Oh, no, I would rather you did not trouble and I won't stay, thank you nevertheless. I expect she will ring me up when she comes in."

"Is there any message I can give her?"

"Well"--she hesitated for an instant--"you might tell her, if you would, that I only returned home at eight o'clock, so that I could not come around any earlier." She glanced rapidly at Irvin, biting her lip. "I wish I could have seen her," she added in a low voice.

"She wishes to see you particularly?"

"Yes. She left a note this afternoon." Again she glanced at him in a troubled way.

"Well, I suppose it cannot be helped," she added and smilingly extended her hand.

"Good night, Mr. Irvin. Don't bother to come to the door."

But Irvin passed Hinkes and walked out under the porch with Margaret Halley. Humid yellow mist floated past the street lamps, and seemed to have gathered in a moving reef around the little runabout car which was standing outside the house, its motor chattering tremulously.

"Phew! a beastly night!" he said. "foggy and wet."

"It's a brute isn't it?" said the girl laughingly, and turned on the steps so that the light shining out of the hallway gleamed on her white teeth and upraised eyes. She was pulling on big, ugly, furred gloves, and Monte Irvin mentally contrasted her fresh, athletic type of beauty with the delicate, exotic charm of his wife.

She opened the door of the little car, got in and drove off, waving one hugely gloved hand to Irvin as he stood in the porch looking after her. When the red tail-light had vanished in the mist he returned to the house and re-entered the library. If only all his wife's friends were like Margaret Halley, he mused, he might have been spared the insupportable misgivings which were goading him to madness. His mind filled with poisonous suspicions, he resumed his pacing of the library, awaiting and dreading that which should confirm his blackest theories. He was unaware of the fact that throughout the interview he had held the stump of cigar between his teeth. He held it there yet, pacing, pacing up and down the long room. Then came the expected summons. The telephone bell rang. Monte Irvin clenched his hands and inhaled deeply. His color changed in a manner that would have aroused a physician's interest. Regaining his self-possession by a visible effort, he crossed to a small side-table upon which the instrument rested. Rolling the cigar stump into the left corner of his mouth, he took up the receiver.

"Hallo!" he said.

"Someone named Brisley, sir, wishes--"

"Put him through to me here."

"Very good, sir."

A short interval, then:

"Yes?" said Monte Irvin.

"My name is Brisley. I have a message for Mr. Monte Irvin."

"Monte Irvin speaking. Anything to report, Brisley?"

Irvin's deep, rich voice was not entirely under control.

"Yes, sir. The lady drove by taxicab from Prince's Gate to Albemarle Street."

"Ah!"

"Went up to chambers of Sir Lucien Pyne and was admitted."

"Well?"

"Twenty minutes later came out. Lady was with Sir Lucien. Both walked around to old Bond Street. The Honorable Quentin Gray--"

"Ah!" breathed Irvin.

--Overtook them there. He got out of a cab. He joined them. All three up to apartments of a professional crystal-gazer styling himself Kazmah 'the dream-reader.'"

A puzzled expression began to steal over the face of Monte Irvin. At the sound of the telephone bell he had paled somewhat. Now he began to recover his habitual florid coloring.

"Go on," he directed, for the speaker had paused.

"Seven to ten minutes later," resumed the nasal voice, "Mr. Gray came down. He hailed a passing cab, but man refused to stop. Mr. Gray seemed to be very irritable."

The fact that the invisible speaker was reading from a notebook he betrayed by his monotonous intonation and abbreviated sentences, which resembled those of a constable giving evidence in a police court.

"He walked off rapidly in direction of Piccadilly. Colleague followed. Near the Ritz he obtained a cab. He returned in same to old Bond Street. He ran upstairs and was gone from four-and-a-half to five minutes. He then came down again. He was very pale and agitated. He discharged cab and walked away. Colleague followed. He saw Mr. Gray enter Prince's Restaurant. In the hall Mr. Gray met a gent unknown by sight to colleague. Following some conversation both gents went in to dinner. They are there now. Speaking from Dover Street Tube."

"Yes, yes. But the lady?"

"A native, possibly Egyptian, apparently servant of Kazmah, came out a few minutes after Mr. Gray had gone for cab, and went away. Sir Lucien Pyne and lady are still in Kazmah's rooms."

"What!" cried Irvin, pulling out his watch and glancing at the disk. "But it's after eight o'clock!"

"Yes, sir. The place is all shut up, and other offices in block closed at six. Door of Kazmah's is locked. I knocked and got no reply."

"Damn it! You're talking nonsense! There must be another exit."

"No, sir. Colleague has just relieved me. Left two gents over their wine at Prince's." Monte Irvin's color began to fade slowly.

"Then it's Pyne!" he whispered. The hand which held the receiver shook. "Brisley--meet me at the Piccadilly end of Bond Street. I am coming now."

He put down the telephone, crossed to the wall and pressed a button. The cigar stump held firmly between his teeth, he stood on the rug before the hearth, facing the door. Presently it opened and Hinkes came in.

"The car is ready, Hinkes?"

"Yes, sir, as you ordered. Shall Pattison come round to the door?"

"At once."

"Very good, sir."

He withdrew, closing the door quietly, and Monte Irvin stood staring across the library at the full-length portrait in oils of his wife in the pierrot dress which she had worn in the third act of *The Maid of the Masque*.

The clock in the hall struck half-past eight.

2. The Apartments Of Kazmah

It was rather less than two hours earlier on the same evening that Quentin Gray came out of the confectioner's shop in old Bond Street carrying a neat parcel. Yellow dusk was closing down upon this bazaar of the New Babylon, and many of the dealers in precious gems, vendors of rich stuffs, and makers of modes had already deserted their shops. Smartly dressed show-girls, saleswomen, girl clerks and others crowded the pavements, which at high noon had been thronged with ladies of fashion. Here a tailor's staff, there a hatter's lingered awhile as iron shutters and gratings were secured, and bidding one another good night, separated and made off towards Tube and bus. The working day was ended. Society was dressing for dinner.

Gray was about to enter the cab which awaited him, and his fresh-colored, boyish face wore an expression of eager expectancy, which must have betrayed the fact to an experienced beholder that he was hurrying to keep an agreeable appointment. Then, his hand resting on the handle of the cab-door, this expression suddenly changed to one of alert suspicion.

A tall, dark man, accompanied by a woman muffled in grey furs and wearing a silk scarf over her hair, had passed on foot along the opposite side of the street. Gray had seen them through the cab windows.

His smooth brow wrinkled and his mouth tightened to a thin straight line beneath the fair "regulation" moustache. He fumbled under his overcoat for loose silver, drew out a handful and paid off the taximan.

Sometimes walking in the gutter in order to avoid the throngs upon the pavement, regardless of the fact that his glossy dress-boots were becoming spattered with mud, Gray hurried off in pursuit of the pair. Twenty yards ahead he overtook them, as they were on the point of passing a picture dealer's window, from which yellow light streamed forth into the humid dusk. They were walking slowly, and Gray stopped in front of them.

"Hello, you too!" he cried. "Where are you off to? I was on my way to call for you, Rita."

Flushed and boyish he stood before them, and his annoyance was increased by their failure to conceal the fact that his appearance was embarrassing if not unwelcome. Mrs. Monte Irvin was a petite, pretty woman, although some of the more wonderful bronzed tints of her hair suggested the employment of henna, and her naturally lovely complexion was delicately and artistically enhanced by art. Nevertheless, the flower-like face peeping out from the folds of a gauzy scarf, like a rose from a mist, whilst her soft little chin nestled into the fur, might have explained even in the case of an older man the infatuation which Quentin Gray was at no pains to hide.

She glanced up at her companion, Sir Lucien Pyne, a swarthy, cynical type of aristocrat, imperturbably. Then: "I had left a note for you, Quentin," she said hurriedly. She seemed to be in a dangerously high-strung condition.

"But I have booked a table and a box," cried Gray, with a hint of juvenile petulance.

"My dear Gray," said Sir Lucien coolly, "we are men of the world--and we do not look for consistency in womenfolk. Mrs. Irvin has decided to consult a palmist or a hypnotist or some such occult authority before dining with you this evening. Doubtless she seeks to learn if the play to which you propose to take her is an amusing one."

His smile of sardonic amusement Gray found to be almost insupportable, and although Sir Lucien refrained from looking at Mrs. Irvin whilst he spoke, it was evident enough that his words held some covert significance, for:

"You know perfectly well that I have a particular reason for seeing him," she said.

"A woman's particular reason is a man's feeble excuse," murmured Sir Lucien rudely. "At least, according to a learned Arabian philosopher."

"I was going to meet you at Prince's," said Mrs. Irvin hurriedly, and again glancing at Gray. There was a pathetic hesitancy in her manner, the hesitancy of a weak woman who adheres to a purpose only by supreme effort.

"Might I ask," said Gray, "the name of the pervert you are going to consult?"

Again she hesitated and glanced rapidly at Sir Lucien, but he was staring coolly in another direction.

"Kazmah," she replied in a low voice.

"Kazmah!" cried Gray. "The man who sells perfume and pretends to read dreams? What an extraordinary notion. Wouldn't tomorrow do? He will surely have shut up shop!"

"I have been at pains to ascertain," replied Sir Lucien, "at Mrs. Irvin's express desire, that the man of mystery is still in session and will receive her."

Beneath the mask of nonchalance which he wore it might have been possible to detect excitement repressed with difficulty; and had Gray been more composed and not obsessed with the idea that Sir Lucien had deliberately intruded upon his plans for the evening, he could not have failed to perceive that Mrs. Monte Irvin was feverishly preoccupied with matters having no relation to dinner and the theatre. But his private suspicions grew only the more acute.

"Then if the dinner is not off," he said, "may I come along and wait for you?"

"At Kazmah's?" asked Mrs. Irvin. "Certainly." She turned to Sir Lucien. "Shall you wait? It isn't much use as I'm dining with Quentin."

"If I do not intrude," replied the baronet, "I will accompany you as far as the cave of the oracle, and then bid you good night."

The trio proceeded along old Bond Street. Quentin Gray regarded the story of Kazmah as a very poor lie devised on the spur of the moment. If he had been less infatuated, his natural sense of dignity must have dictated an offer to release Mrs. Irvin from her engagement. But jealousy stimulates the worst instincts and destroys the best. He was determined to attach himself as closely as the old Man of the Sea attached himself to Es-Sindibad, in order that the lie might be unmasked. Mrs. Irvin's palpable embarrassment and nervousness he ascribed to her perception of his design

A group of shop girls and others waiting for buses rendered it impossible for the three to keep abreast, and Gray, falling to the rear, stepped upon the foot of a little man who was walking close behind them.

"Sorry, sir," said the man, suppressing an exclamation of pain--for the fault had been Gray's.

Gray muttered an ungenerous acknowledgment, all anxiety to regain the side of Mrs. Irvin; for she seemed to be speaking rapidly and excitedly to Sir Lucien.

He recovered his place as the two turned in at a lighted doorway. Upon the wall was a bronze plate bearing the inscription:

KAZMAH

Second Floor

Gray fully expected Mrs. Irvin to suggest that he should return later. But without a word she began to ascend the stairs. Gray followed, Sir Lucien standing aside to give him precedence. On the second floor was a door painted in Oriental fashion. It possessed neither bell nor knocker, but as one stepped upon the threshold this door opened noiselessly as if dumbly inviting the visitor to enter the square apartment discovered. This apartment was richly furnished in the Arab manner, and lighted by a fine brass lamp swung upon chains from the painted ceiling. The intricate perforations of the lamp were inset with colored glass, and the result was a subdued and warm illumination. Odd-looking oriental vessels, long-necked jars, jugs with tenuous spouts and squat bowls possessing engraved and figured covers emerged from the shadows of niches. A low divan with gaily colored mattresses extended from the door around one corner of the room where it terminated beside a kind of mushrabiyyeh cabinet or cupboard. Beyond this cabinet was a long, low counter laden with statuettes of Nile gods, amulets, mummy-beads and little stoppered flasks of blue enamel ware. There were two glass cases filled with other strange-looking antiquities. A faint perfume was perceptible.

Sir Lucien entering last of the party, the door closed behind him, and from the cabinet on the right of the divan a young Egyptian stepped out. He wore the customary white robe, red sash and red slippers, and a tarbush, the little scarlet cap commonly called a fez, was set upon his head. He walked to a door on the left of the counter, and slid it noiselessly open. Bowing gravely, "The Sheikh el Kazmah awaits," he said, speaking with the soft intonation of a native of Upper Egypt.

It now became evident, even to the infatuated Gray, that Mrs. Irvin was laboring under the influence of tremendous excitement. She turned to him quickly, and he thought that her face looked almost haggard, whilst her eyes seemed to have changed color--become lighter, although he could not be certain that this latter effect was not due to the peculiar illumination of the room. But when she spoke her voice was unsteady.

"Will you see if you can find a cab," she said. "It is so difficult at night, and my shoes will get frightfully muddy crossing Piccadilly. I shall not be more than a few minutes." She walked through the doorway, the Egyptian standing aside as she passed. He followed her, but came out again almost immediately, reclosed the door, and retired into the cabinet, which was evidently his private cubicle.

Silence claimed the apartment. Sir Lucien threw himself nonchalantly upon the divan, and took out his cigarette-case.

"Will you have a cigarette, Gray?" he asked.

"No thanks," replied the other, in tones of smothered hostility. He was ill at ease, and paced the apartment nervously. Pyne lighted a cigarette, and tossed the extinguished match into a brass bowl.

"I think," said Gray jerkily, "I shall go for a cab. Are you remaining?"

"I am dining at the club," answered Pyne, "but I can wait until you return."

"As you wish," jerked Gray. "I don't expect to be long."

He walked rapidly to the outer door, which opened at his approach and closed noiselessly behind him as he made his exit.

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

