

Love Monster of Fall River

by John Makris, 1874-1957

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Chapter 1

A Slaughter House.

What strange fascination compelled this love slave to return to her brutal master?

Dawn slowly forsook the last remnants of velvety darkness, breaking over the horizon amid a cyclonic whirlpool of raging winds. Inspector Abel J. Violette shivered. His partner, Inspector Hugh Bogan, had suddenly called his attention to an almost indistinct object a dozen odd yards from the mouth of Eagan's Court. No amount of wind could have made Violette shiver like that. The 5:30 AM, telephone call to the Fall River, Massachusetts Police Headquarters reporting a woman screaming probably was of no minor nature. Somehow, Violette harbored instincts for the worst...

They made their way in slowly. They stopped quickly, stared down.

"For the love of Mike, Abel," exclaimed Bogan. "It's a woman."

The wind moaned eerily through the underpass, plaintive with whispering sighs of despair. Bogan shook himself, muttered: "She's dead!"

Murder lay sprawled at their feet.

She was crumpled on her right side, her knees almost doubled up to her stomach. Beneath the guise of distorted features stamped by inexorable death, her voluptuous beauty remained unmarred. Violette bent over her. Her throat had been slashed with such terrific ferocity which made Violette wonder what kept it on her shoulders.

"I'll get the Medical Examiner," offered Bogan.

Violette nodded. Bleak, greyish light filtered into the murder court, bathing the squat brick buildings, revealing scores of neighbors with their faces pressed against window-panes. Others, braving the howling and whipping wind, drifted near Violette and the gruesome corpse. Violette wondered who made the call to headquarters, which resulted in the assignment of Violette and Bogan to investigate weird screams of terror in the vicinity of Eagan's Court which ran 03 Spring Street.

Violette asked questions, endeavoring to establish the slain woman's identity. She remained a question mark. The crowd of morbidly curious increased.

Violette's continued interrogation proved no headway. To the neighbors, strangely enough, she remained unrecognizable.

A little later, Bogan arrived with Medical Examiner Doctor Thomas Gunning. The Doctor examined the woman carefully.

"A terrible way to die," he commented, standing up. "Head nearly severed. Violette. Practically to the cranial vertebrae. It took a remarkably strong wrist to do that, now mind you, in one cruel sweep. As for the lethal—

"Doubtful," he said. "The condition of her clothed lower exterior belies that. However, an autopsy will prove definitely whether or not."

While the woman was being prepared for removal to the morgue, Violette let his eyes wander keenly over the gathered crowd. His eyes fastened on a woman who elbowed her way through the crowd, her eyes widening into incredible pools of horror at the nearing sight of the slain woman. Violette reached her just about as she opened her mouth to scream.

"Don't," he said, not too harshly. "You know who she is, don't you?"

The woman looked up at him, her eyes glazed. Violette turned her away from the gruesome sight, repeated his question. The woman shook her head, ridding herself of a numbing lethargy of horror. She moved her lips soundlessly. Then the words tumbled out over each other: "Yes, yes. I know. It's Domka." She broke Violette's restraining grip on her arm, spun around and pointed "It's Domka!"

Illustration:

Domka Peremybda: She loved—then hated.

But she could not escape the terrible doom destiny had in store for her.

"Domka, what?" Violette asked. "Where does she live?"

The woman was on the verge of replying when a tall middle-aged man hurried over. Disregarding Violette, man and woman conversed excitedly in a foreign tongue.

Russian, thought Violette.

Impatient at the interruption, Violette horned in. At his barrage of rapid-fire questions, the man said he was Jacob Maker, and the woman that Violette had been questioning, was his wife. They ran a variety store just around the corner, and their home was directly in back, right where the slain woman was found. *The dead woman*, Maker said, *was Domka*.

The name was familiar to Violette, but much to his disgust at the moment, he couldn't place it. Her identity thus established, Violette told Bogan to comb the neighborhood and find out all he could about the victim. Then Violette, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Maker, walked into their store on Spring Street to question them further.

The Makers seemed reticent to talk. Too uneasy and ill-at-ease, thought Violette. Why? After a little verbal prodding, Mrs. Maker said that Domka was a good girl that did her work satisfactorily and never went out evenings. That, for Violette, wasn't enough. He wanted to know how long she worked for the Makers? *Where had she come from? And why didn't she go out evenings?*

Violette's last question seemed to strike the Makers between the eyes. They glanced at each other apprehensively. Violette was convinced that he had struck something tangible here. Was the fear of death the reason Domka Peremybida stayed in evenings?

“Now, look,” Violette said. “I don’t want to rush you. I want to get everything straight. Let’s start from the time you hired Domka.”

“She’s been with us for five months,” Jack Maker said. “We needed a girl to keep house, so we advertised for one. Domka answered, so we hired her. We got along fine. I’ve never met such a clean and industrious girl. She did the housework. My wife and I were in the store earlier than usual this morning. We had new stock in last night that had to be stacked and put away. When Domka didn’t appear at the store this morning, we thought she overslept. You see, she was up at five every morning to light the stove. Then she’d leave the house and come to the store through Eagan’s Court. We have a little kitchen in back of the store. Domka prepared the breakfast. Then she’d go back to the house, rouse the children and prepare them for school. Of course, she had the house work to do, too. Such a pity she had to die.”

When Violette reverted back to his questions about Domka’s friends, relations, and her strange reluctance to go out evenings, Maker shrugged helplessly.

“Nobody ever came to see Domka, Inspector. We know nothing of her past life. But we did notice something strange.”

His wife started to weep softly.

“My wife and I couldn’t but help feel that poor Domka lived in great fear of her life. We know that she fastened all her windows and bolted the door before retiring.”

“In other words,” mused Violette, “there is a person from whom she lived in mortal fear?”

The Makers nodded.

“You haven’t told me enough,” Violette said. “In the five months that Domka stayed with you—you can’t tell me that you don’t know much about her. It isn’t possible. Try to think-of letters, pictures, anything. Living in fear of someone means that she knew who—“

“I think it’s a man,” Maker said suddenly.

Violette’s eyes slowly narrowed. “So you think it’s a man, eh?” he asked softly. “Why?”

A frightened look passed between the Makers. The husband wet his lips nervously, shifted uneasily.

“A man has been watching my store for the last ten days. Every night he’d be out there, watching. I grew nervous, thinking maybe he was going to rob me. Well, on March 13, he walked into my store. I didn’t know what to do. The man scared me. I asked him what he wanted. He said he wanted to speak to Domka. I refused him, and he got angry. When I said I’d call the police, he hurried away muttering—”

“Muttering, what?” snapped Violette.

“It was Russian,” Maker said, “and I understood every word. He said: ‘I’ll have my way with her or one of these days—’ He left and I haven’t seen him since.”

Violette’s brain bristled with angles. There was only one serious drawback. He didn’t know enough about the slain woman’s past to formulate more conclusive theories. However, one fact was certain. The slaying had two possible motives. Either jealousy or killer-inspired rage of a thwarted lover. Domka’s fears were well-founded, and her reluctance to venture out evenings was now explainable.

The man who watched Maker’s store for ten days and then asked for Domka, mused Violette, *was the killer.* There appeared no other feasible solution at this

early stage of the investigation. On that particular assumption Domka Peremybida met sudden and horrible death that very morning of March 14th.

Assured that Jacob Maker would know this man if he met him again, Violette walked out. He found Bogan at the murder scene. Bogan hadn't obtained any helpful information. If Domka Peremybida was an enigma to the Makers, she was a riddle to the neighbors.

Without wasting time, Violette and Bogan went about their investigation methodically. The corpse had been removed, but an ugly smear of crimson stained the underpass. The trail of blood receded backwards from the congealed pool where Domka had collapsed to the back door of Jack Maker's home. The investigating Inspectors climbed the stoop into a dark hallway. Bogan used his flashlight.

Crimson tell-tale hand prints were on the wall where Domka Peremybida, her throat slashed, had placed her blood-drenched hands for support. Her intention, assumed Violette, was to reach the outside to summon aid. At the end of the narrow corridor, a door gaped open. They picked their way across the intervening space carefully, avoiding the dark pools of blood on the floor. They froze on the threshold of the kitchen...

"My God!" husked Bogan. "It looks like a slaughter house."

Violette thought so, too. The linoleum was smeared with a coating of blood. There was a long smear where some one had slipped. Most of the kitchen furniture was over-turned. Directly under the only window lay a blood-stained razor. The sash still swung in the raging wind. Violette walked over. There were red marks on the sash. On the roof of the leanto, beneath the window, were scores of crimson spots.

Illustration:

Arrow points to window where a murderer manage to
crawl through and escape.

"Here's the exit of the killer," Violette said, "and also his entrance. It's easy to figure. Domka came down here to light the stove. She never had a chance. Most likely, she never had even a split-chance to put the light on. The killer waited for her in the dark. He suddenly grabbed her by the hair, forcing her head back. There's no question but that she knew her attacker. She screamed in terror. The murderer then slashed her throat with the razor he brought with him, dropped it, and escaped through the window. Domka, still alive, managed to get out to the underpass where she collapsed and died.

"It's a wonder Maker's kids didn't wake up," Bogan said. "From what I gather, the screams had the neighbors scared witless."

"Youngsters are hard sleepers," Violette said. "Even if they did awake, they'd be at loss, and probably fall back asleep. Now, this man that kept tabs on Maker's store. He planned this murder. He knew he'd have to catch Domka alone and he did. He must have spotted the Makers opening up early, so he walked through the underpass, climbed into the kitchen up from the lean-to. No doubt, his purpose was to find Domka's bedroom, but she walked into the kitchen and then—"

"A murder for us to crack," Bogan said soberly.

The blood on the window sill showed that the killer had cut himself, mused Violette. He picked up the death weapon, and carefully wrapped it in his handkerchief.

They searched the Maker house carefully in hopes of picking up a clue. They were disappointed. All they had was a razor of foreign-manufacture. However, Violette had hopes about the murder weapon. It was a peculiar type, hand forged.

The day of the murder, March 14th, wound up with straight routine investigation. The following day, Violette and Bogan endeavored to seek, if possible, any means from which they could delve into Domka Peremybida's past life. It didn't seem possible that she was friendless. Violette couldn't console himself there. She was too attractive. There was something about her, even in death, that had stirred one word within Violette's brain.

Sex!

Violette felt that that was the answer to the whole perplexing mess, and the key was the man who had demanded to see Domka in Maker's store. All roads leading in and out of the city were put under strictest surveillance. Railroad stations and freight-yards were watched night and day. The description of the mysterious man wanted in connection with the murder was circulated throughout Fall River, and practically every major city in New England. The waterfront was carefully searched. Suspects, of Russian and Polish birth, were picked up and questioned. They were released upon subsequent proof of their innocence.

"We know that he's a Russian," Violette said to Bogan. "I'm riding a hunch that Domka wasn't his wife. I'll give you odds that we're bucking a sex slaying, Hugh. Doctor Gunning's report shows that she wasn't criminally assaulted at the time of the murder. Hugh, according to Gunning, there were peculiarities on her body that convinces me, we are up against a sex-maddened sadist."

"You're spoofing," joshed Bogan.

"Am I?" snapped Violette. "Listen Hugh. There were thin welts on Domka's thighs and back. Almost invisible, but there just the same. They're not recent, I'll grant you that. Where would she get welts like that unless she was mixed up with a sadist? We can check our records on all persons involved in sex cases. Maybe we'll come across a lead. Anyway, why didn't she have friends? Why didn't she go out evenings?"

Chapter 2

So He Finally Killed Her!

Illustration:

Chief of Police Abel Violette: "We're up against a peculiar type of criminal—perhaps a madman—he must be brought in."

Late that day, the 15th, the first major clue in the fiendish murder of Domka Peremybida cropped up. Captain Martin Feeney of Division Two made his findings to Chief of Police Medley, Violette and Bogan. One of his men, investigating throughout Fall River to discover more information about the dead

woman, found her former residence at 2 Hall Street. Violette and Bogan hurried out, finding that residence to be a two story weather-beaten house. A kindly faced woman of Polish extraction answered the door. Upon introducing themselves, the woman bade them to enter.

Violette said: "Do you know Domka Peremybida?"

The woman smiled in recollection. "Indeed. Very well... She boarded here. She moved away five months ago. I hope there's nothing wrong."

"Domka is dead," Violette said without preamble. "I'm sorry to say that. She was murdered! You wouldn't have any idea of who might have wanted to kill her, have you?"

The woman's otherwise normal breath became a sibilant hiss. Her gentle eyes dilated with terror. Her body grew rigid, her hands clenched. For a moment Violette thought he'd have a case of hysteria on his hands. But, then, the woman made a quick recovery of her faculties, paced the room nervously, avoiding Violette's inquiring gaze. Finally, as though making up her mind, she faced the waiting Inspectors.

She said: "So he finally killed her!"

Violette's head jerked up with surprise. Here was their first major clue that he felt positive would lead to the apprehension of the fiendish killer.

"Who did kill her?" he bit out. "What was his name?"

"So he finally killed her," the woman repeated. "He's a devil that Anton. I told poor Domka to watch out for him."

Emotion overcame, suffused her eyes with blinding tears. She collapsed limply into the nearest chair. "Oh, the devil. His name is Anton Retkevitch. I hadn't heard about Domka's death. Everybody in the neighborhood knew that it would happen sooner or later. It was bound to happen. The devil just couldn't leave Domka alone. Oh, God, oh..."

It dawned on Violette suddenly. Now he recalled where he had first heard of Domka Peremybida. The name Anton Retkevitch limned the picture. About six months ago, a man named Anton Retkevitch had been sentenced to thirty days in the New Bedford House of Correction for assault on a woman named Domka Peremybida! Slow, but sure, Violette's afore-mentioned deduction of the motive materialized. For a half hour, they listened to an unbelievable tale pouring from the landlady's trembling lips. Violette shook his head in disbelief. It was too fantastic, but he didn't doubt because he knew it was logical. The extremes were what amazed him. After securing Retkevitch's address, they left.

Retkevitch boarded at 27 Hall Street, and the landlady, Mrs. Bertha Fishstein, admitted them upstairs to Retkevitch's room. Violette knocked, and a voice said to come in. Entering, Violette's eyes rifled the room in one sweeping glance. The owner of the voice sat sprawled on the bed reading a book. The room was ship-shape. Frankly, Violette didn't expect to find Retkevitch in the room. The killer's past experience with Domka Peremybida was too well known around the neighborhood for him to linger around after her death. Provided of course, and yet to be definitely proven by Violette, that Retkevitch was the killer.

"You're the man that shared this room with Anton Retkevitch, aren't you?" Violette asked sharply.

The man nodded, swinging his legs off the bed. Violette showed him the murder razor, asked him if he recognized it. The man nodded, said it belonged to Retkevitch. Upon being asked where Retkevitch was, his roommate

shrugged. He asserted, however, that Retkevitch had mentioned something about going to Pittsburgh about a week ago.

“What time,” Violette asked, “did Retkevitch leave the morning of Tuesday, the 14th? That was the morning Domka Peremybida was killed. Give me a straight answer now.”

“Four thirty,” he answered promptly. “I heard his alarm clock ring, and I woke up. He wouldn’t tell me where he was going.”

Further questioning failed to divulge any information of importance. Once outside, Violette and Bogan separated, each taking a different side of the neighborhood. Violette wanted the story told by the dead woman’s exlandlady to double check. Three hours later they met in the Inspector’s quarters on the second floor at headquarters. They exchanged looks of stunned disbelief. They sat down without speaking for several minutes, dragging furiously on their cigarettes.

“I’ll be damned,” Bogan finally exclaimed. “I still can’t believe it, Abel. We’re modern, civilized. Gosh! Stuff like that defies the imagination. Like a chapter from the life of DuBarry when she wasn’t a lady.”

Violette laughed grimly. “I was closer than I thought, Hugh. Sadists may be one name for them, but monsters fits them better. They’re humans like you and I. Only they are insane subjects with an incurable lust. Retkevitch is a sadist. A dangerous one. Now, let’s see what we’ve got...”

Domka Peremybida had arrived in Fall River about six months ago. She took lodgings at 2 Hall Street, and found work in one of the numerous cotton mills. She minded her own business, and was well liked. She did, however, mention the fact that she came from Pittsburgh. Several weeks later, Anton Retkevitch came and immediately boarded at 27 Hall Street. Several days later the wheels of the first chapter of this strange drama which culminated into horrible death, took place early in the evening. Domka and Retkevitch met. As testified by numerous neighbors, Domka was terrified upon seeing Retkevitch. As one man had put it: “My God! She looked as though the very devil himself stood before her.”

They quarreled bitterly on the street corner. She left him in a smouldering rage, shouting threats. Then Retkevitch floated talk around that she was his wife. Domka vehemently denied this—saying she hadn’t married Retkevitch in Pittsburgh or any place else. The one notable feature was the strange power Retkevitch held over her. She’d never avoid him when he spoke to her. She’d listen—like a person fascinated by a deadly cobra coiled to strike at the slightest move. Then, apparently weakened by his persistence, she started losing ground.

She was a woman undecided to a point of distraction. She avoided whatever few friends she had made. She stayed in her room. Her landlady, passing outside her room one night, heard Domka talking to herself in a despairing voice. It wasn’t a question of eavesdropping; she, too, knew about Retkevitch. She wanted to help Domka.

The words sifted through the door: “Oh, why can’t he forget the past. I’ll go crazy thinking about it. I am no longer like that. I never want to be like that again. I—I want a good man for a husband. I want babies. Oh, I want to be happy. What can I do so that he will leave me alone?”

“Then,” said the landlady, “late one afternoon the neighbors were amazed to see Domka and Retkevitch enter this house. Retkevitch wasn’t seen leaving. Fear for Domka’s safety impelled the neighbors to know what was going on in

Domka's room. Opposite the room which she rented from me was an unoccupied apartment. Because of this, Domka never pulled down her window shade. The neighbors gathered in the empty flat, watching, hardly believing what they saw. They could see into the room—they could see Domka and Retkevitch in close embrace. Suddenly Retkevitch tossed her on to the bed and came at her with a heavy belt upraised. He whipped her unmercifully across her bare back and shoulders. She lay there cowering, arms uplifted as if beseeching him to desist. Raw, red welts appeared on her white flesh. Finally, exhausted, she fell back on the bed, out of range of the astounded watchers."

Violette shook his head as he clipped the sheaf of reports together.

"For a woman that hated a man," he said, "she couldn't do much about it. She was completely under his control, and had she lived, it would have been the same old story. But she tried darn hard—"

It was true. She tried to throw off Retkevitch's domination by refusing to see him. One night, as she returned home from work, Retkevitch, lurking in the hallway, grabbed her and attempted to assault her. She did the unbelievable. Something that threw him off entirely.

She screamed—long, terrified screams of terror. The neighbors responded to her appeal for help, and Retkevitch was held for police arrival which netted him a thirty day sentence in the House of Correction.

"And while that filthy rat served time," rejoined Bogan, "she packed dunnage and left Hall Street."

Illustration:

Raging, cursing, he struck her again and again
until she fell back unconscious.

Chapter 3

Domka's Innocent Slip.

From their files, Violette secured a mug-shot of Retkevitch and hurried to Jacob Maker's store. Maker took one look at the picture, and nodded his head violently.

"That's him, Inspector," he shouted. "That's the man."

Back to headquarters, the Inspector-partners found new orders awaiting them. Chief Medley had checked their reports, and ordered Bogan to leave immediately for Pittsburgh to check the Retkevitch-Peremybida state of affairs. Violette was ordered to pursue his investigation in Fall River.

Working on his own, Violette found the sledding tough. There wasn't a single opening to actually work from. Circulars bearing the likeness and description of the fugitive killer were sent throughout New England.

Retkevitch was around 35 years old, stocky build, and weighed 160 pounds. He had a mustache, dark eyes and hair.

Three days passed with no progress. Violette fumed with impatience. He knew a denouement was somewhere in the offing. Three days later Bogan returned from Pittsburgh with a story that merely corroborated what had transpired on Hall Street.

With the help of the Pittsburgh police, Bogan finally traced the former residence of the couple to Carnegie, a small railroad construction camp belonging to the Pennsylvania Railway. They operated a boarding house catering to the railroad employees, living as man and wife. But soon their neighbors and boarders got wise. They acted too unnatural and quarreled too much to be man and wife. Then they began to see things.

The people resented Retkevitch's brutal treatment of Domka. Fearing bodily harm, Retkevitch left the town hurriedly with Domka. They landed in the small town of Conemaugh, established themselves in the restaurant business. Their life was violent. Retkevitch was maddened with lust beyond reason. She rebelled—not openly to Retkevitch, but to her better senses. She wrote Retkevitch a letter, telling him they were all through, that she was leaving, and for him not to follow her. She left, and wound up in Fall River.

But she made one innocent slip that cost her life. Naturally, after what she had been through, she couldn't forget Retkevitch very easily. She wrote to a friend of hers inquiring about him, enclosing her forwarding address. This friend showed the letter to Retkevitch, and only God knows what was in the heart of the lustful beast when he left for Fall River.

Days sped by, and no progress was made. The case against Retkevitch, however, was now air-tight. There wasn't the slightest doubt as to his guilt. Violette knew every angle of the case by heart. Despite what had occurred when Retkevitch caught up with Domka in Fall River, she had managed to shake off his sinister influence, and had him arrested. That was the turning point. He brooded over his lost power, grew antagonistic and plotted revenge. Then he murdered her.

The clew that finally opened the trail to Retkevitch cropped up on March 28, 1914, two weeks after the wanton murder in Eagan's Court. Thomas McGlyn, a local letter carrier, had a letter for delivery to Anton Retkevitch. It was sent in care of a grocer on Hall Street.

The letter carrier knew that Retkevitch was wanted for murder so he turned the letter over to Postmaster Durfee who, in turn, took it personally to Chief Medley. The Chief called in Violette and Bogan. They examined the letter. It had been sent by a man named Mike Petroky with 103 Salem Street, Boston, as a return address. The letter in itself was friendly. It informed that Petroky had lost his old job in Carnegie, Pa., and had come to Boston in search of work. He requested that Retkevitch write to him if there was any work in Fall River. Nothing more. It was obvious that Petroky knew nothing of the crime Retkevitch had committed.

"Well, that's that," Chief Medley said: "Another blind trail."

Violette looked thoughtfully at the letter. "I wouldn't say that, Chief," he said suddenly. "That letter may, after all, do the trick and result in Retkevitch's capture. Here's my plan. Frankly, it's a gamble. We'll mail a reply to this letter to the return address with Retkevitch's signature affixed to it. We'll state that there's no work here in Fall River, but that Retkevitch had had a good job on a railroad construction outfit offered him. Then we would specify that Petroky meet Retkevitch at the return address and they'd go together."

Chief Medley approved the plan. The letter was mailed at once. Violette followed it on the first train to Boston, praying that somebody would claim the letter, and with the odds one thousand to one, to strike the trail of the wanton killer of Domka Peremybida. On his arrival in Boston, Violette discussed the

case with the local police authorities. Inspector William Rooney was assigned to help him.

With Rooney, Violette made his way to Salem Street. The street was in Boston's North End. It was no more than a narrow thoroughfare infested with all types of foreigners. Aged and weatherbeaten homes housed a conglomeration of men that, Violette knew, nothing short of a dynamite blast would pry a word loose from.

Walking casually past 103, they noted it was nothing more than a foreign mail exchange. Foreigners landing in Boston and with no specific mailing address, used the general delivery of 103. The place was operated by Morris Bernstein.

Violette, to enlighten the situation, hardly appeared like a police officer on the trail of a dangerous criminal. He was dressed in rough woolen pants tucked in his boots. A heavy mackinaw swathed his upper body. His beard was two days old. Conferring hastily with Rooney, the Boston Inspector sauntered casually across the street, and took position in a doorway. Violette walked into the mail exchange.

The main room of business was large with tables and chairs scattered around. A large, pot-bellied stove threw forth heat from the center of the room. On the right of the entrance was a long counter with an iron grillwork. Violette made his way over to the wicket, beckoned to the man behind.

The man was Morris Bernstein. Violette flashed his badge, and said: "Where can I find Mike Petroky?"

The owner said he didn't know.

"How about Anton Retkevitch?"

Again Bernstein shook his head in negative response.

"Look, then," Violette said to him. "I'm sticking around. When anybody calls for mail to either of the two men, you nod."

Violette took a seat near a grimy window, watching unobtrusively the assortment of Greeks, Poles, Russians, and other foreigners that inhabited the room. Every time the door opened, his eyes rifled over to it. Several hours slipped by, and Violette began to wonder whether or not he had himself assigned to a wild-goose chase.

The door opened suddenly. Violette riveted his eyes on it. A roughly dressed man stood on the threshold, his eyes taking in every occupant of the room. He was heavily bearded, bundled up in a long overcoat. He hesitated for several minutes before he finally made his way toward the wicket. With his heart thumping against his ribs, Violette watched Bernstein. He had a feeling, a funny feeling like a premonition. Something told him that the climax was near.

The bearded man said something to Bernstein in a low, surly voice. Violette couldn't get the drift. However, Bernstein turned his back to the stranger and almost imperceptibly, he nodded his head. Violette got to his feet slowly, and made his way across the room. He had never seen Retkevitch personally, and this fellow in no way resembled the picture they had of the killer. The unkempt beard hid most of the stranger's features. But Violette had that feeling. He was practically atop the man, his fingers locked on his service revolver in the roomy mackinaw pocket. He stood directly behind the stranger—

"Haven't seen you for a long time, Anton," he said harshly.

The stranger stiffened without turning. He was staring at Bernstein with eyes that suddenly flicked fire in their depths. Then he turned, slowly. Violette ran his hands over the stranger's person. He was unarmed.

“That beard isn’t very becoming, Anton,” Violette remarked.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” the stranger said. “My name is Philip Peremybida.”

It was Violette’s turn to stiffen, but with surprise. His lips curled with distaste.

“You louse,” he rapped out. “You weren’t satisfied in killing poor Domka, but you had to use her name.”

The stranger, however, insisted that his name was Peremybida. *If that was the case then*, Violette hammered back, *why did he call for mail belonging to either Petroky or Retkevitch.*

The stranger had no answer. Then the telltale signs of a perverted degenerate crept out. He was yellow clean through. Despite his bulk and strength, he had a case of jitters.

“You—you’ve made a mistake,” he stammered. “I don’t know what you’re talking about. Petroky is sick, and he asked me to come after his mail.”

“Is that so,” Violette said. “Well, we’ll see. Come on, let’s go and see Mr. Petroky.”

Outside, Rooney came over, and Violette told him who he had.

“He claims he isn’t Retkevitch, but he’s a liar.”

The man led them to 62 Salem Street, a broken down three-decker.

At Violette’s curt command, the fellow led the way up to the second floor. He paused outside the nearest door. Violette jabbed him with his gun. The man opened the door. They walked in. Rooney kicked the door shut.

The room was poorly furnished, and reeked with tobacco and stale air. A man lay fully clothed on a duty bed. As he spotted the gun in Violette’s fist, he jumped up excitedly. Violette shoved him back on the bed, said it was police business.

“You can’t push me around,” the man protested. “I didn’t do anything. What do you want?”

“What’s your name?” Violette said.

“Mike Petroky.”

“Fine. So who is this man?”

And Violette swiveled his gun around to the stranger.

“Why, that’s Anton Retkevitch—”

Illustration:

Anton Retkevich: He insisted that he was not the man the police wanted.

Petroky stopped short by the warning gleam in the stranger’s eye.

“Anton Retkevitch,” snapped Violette. “Don’t tell me you haven’t done anything Petroky. You’re under arrest for harboring and abetting a murderer.”

“Murderer,” whispered Petroky. “Him!” His face grew waxy. He implored to Retkevitch, “Is it true, Anton? Did you commit murder?”

Violette was temporarily convinced that Petroky knew nothing of Retkevitch’s crime. Answering Violette’s questions, Petroky asserted that several hours after he had mailed a letter to Retkevitch in Fall River, the killer arrived in Boston. Then when Violette informed Petroky who Retkevitch had murdered—Petroky stared dumbfounded at Retkevitch.

“You couldn’t have done that to Domka,” he cried in disbelief. “Oh, Domka—”

Late that evening, Violette arrived in Fall River with his two prisoners. Retkevitch was booked for murder, and Petroky was held as a material witness.

They had no trouble in establishing the fact that the bearded man was Domka Peremybida heartless killer, Anton Retkevitch.

Retkevitch's trial came up soon, and he went on the stand a marked man. There was no doubt of his guilt. He seemed a man haunted with torturing visions of the woman he had so damnably abused and then butchered with a razor in frenzy. Every statement he made was proven a pack of lies.

To the presiding judge, to the police officials, to the spectators and public in general—Retkevitch was a murderer with a leprous stench that polluted the very courtroom air. In short time, Retkevitch was found guilty of murder in the first degree and sentenced to death in the electric chair.

On the morning of March 14, 1915—exactly one year from the date of the murder, Anton Retkevitch died in the electric chair. And the Fates must have laughed—for on the hour that Domka Peremybida's killer died, she too, had died!

