The Emerald Spy
A Jigsaw Puzzle Thriller

Read the story, assemble the puzzle and interpret the clues. Can you find the solution?

Story by R.D. Zimmerman
Stuart Jamieson leapt to the side as the security robot raised its arm and fired the deadly laser. The pencil-sized beam sliced through the air, missed the secret agent by millimeters, and burned into a steel wall. Rolling across the floor, Jamieson fired his small pistol, but the bullets merely ricocheted off the robot’s alloy skin. Breaking and entering, thought the tall, lean man, was becoming more difficult every year.

Employing all his energy, Jamieson dashed behind the automated creature. The robot, however, was nearly as fast. Using its heat-detecting sensors, it scanned the large room until it located Jamieson, spun around, then leveled the laser again. A stream of piercing light cut through a crate, and Jamieson jumped high and watched as the beam of death cut between his legs. He hadn’t even had his breakfast yet, he thought. It was much too early for such strenuous activity.

Jamieson’s blue eyes spotted a metal drum of solvents across the room; he ran toward it. Positioning himself behind the container, he quickly read the large warning label: *Caution! Highly Flammable!*

Jamieson stood up behind the metal drum and shouted, “Hey, you tub of microchips, over here!”

The automated security device swung around, leveled its laser on Jamieson, and fired. Not wasting a moment, the secret agent hurled himself to the side as the laser beam shot through the air and pierced the metal drum. All once, the solvents exploded into flames. The robot, however, didn’t cease its attack. Mistaking the expanding fire and its heat for an ever-growing army of human intruders, it beamed the laser non-stop.

Pleased, Jamieson slipped away undetected, and by the time he had scurried out into the early morning, the warehouse itself had erupted into flames.

“Stuart! Stuart, answer me!” called a man’s scratchy voice.

His muscles aching, the handsome, dark-haired agent pulled a small black transmitter out of his pocket, and spoke into it. All he really wanted right now was coffee.

“Hello, Granger, what are you doing up so early?” Jamieson said to his commanding officer.

“We have an emergency. I want you in here right away.”

“But ...”

“Stuart, are you still asleep? I should have known. Well, get up at once.
"I want you in here now, understand?" Part of the building exploded in the background, and Granger asked, "What on earth was that?"

Jamieson shrugged and glanced at the blazing building. "Nothing, Granger. I'm just having a smoke. See you in twenty minutes."

Just past eight, Stuart Jamieson arrived at Headquarters, having showered, changed into a gray Italian suit, and consumed a cup of his favorite French roast coffee. Now ready for the day, he proceeded into his superior's office, a spacious wood-paneled room. After making himself comfortable in one of the leather chairs, he picked up a newspaper, glanced at the headlines, then smiled at Granger.

"Good morning, sir."

"You're late, Stuart," snapped Granger, running a hand through his silvery hair.

"Just a bit."

"You're late and we have a major problem. Agent Williams is dead. He was gunned down early this morning before he could make his report. It looks like one of Tarkovsky's people."

Stunned, Jamieson dropped the newspaper and listened to the tragic details. The agent, Jamieson learned, had finally succeeded in penetrating the hidden laboratory of Tarkovsky, the beautiful and brilliant physicist whose lust for power was legend. As suspected, Tarkovsky was near completion of her latest plan: an ultra-high-power, continuous-wave emerald laser so strong that it could easily destroy aircraft, missiles and satellites.

"Ah, lasers," smiled Jamieson. "I was just studying up on those this morning. But an emerald? I thought most solid-state lasers used a ruby."

"They do, but not Tarkovsky's, which is why hers is so strong," explained Granger. "An emerald rather than a ruby crystal is the light-emitting medium. Then the perfectly clear, perfectly flawless gem is doped with a rare-earth element, neodymium, and the result is a laser that doesn't require intense optical pumping. This means that it's not restricted to a pulse-only operation to avoid overheating; instead it's a continuous laser billions of watts strong."

Jamieson rubbed his chin. "Very clever."

"Unfortunately, there's only one thing that's stopping Tarkovsky from threatening our military: a flawless, natural emerald of the proper magnitude to serve as the light-emitting medium."

Jamieson understood it all now. "What you're talking about, of course, is the Highland emerald. It had been written up in all the newspapers recently. "Precisely."

Discovered in the Urals over a hundred years ago, the jewel was the largest flawless emerald known in the world. A crystal of intense, bluish-green, it belonged to the sixth Duke and Duchess of Leith.

Granger paced back and forth. "They usually keep the bloody rock under heavy guard in a museum, and I don't know why they just don't leave it there."

"Because it's tradition for the Duchess to wear it to tonight's Gala Scottish Highland Ball?"

Granger spun around. "Did you say something, Stuart? Now look, be serious. It's an old family tradition that the Duchess wear the emerald to the annual gala Scottish Highland Ball. They're the ones being honored tonight. Do you know what I'm referring to, Jamieson?"

"I'm not sure."

"Well, read the papers you fool! Be alert, that's what you're paid for. Say, and when are you going to check on that smuggling business over at the warehouse?"

"All in good time, sir."

Granger shook his head, then pulled out a wadded-up piece of paper. "This was found on Agent Williams' body. Apparently, one of Tarkovsky's people is going to make an attempt to steal the emerald tonight. We'll have a half dozen agents outside, but I want you inside at the ball itself. Your job is to protect the Duchess. Is that clear?"

"As clear as champagne," said Jamieson, rising.

"Stay close to the Duchess and stay away from the liquor!" shouted Granger. "Don't forget, we're counting on you to stop Tarkovsky's plan!"

As Stuart Jamieson swung open the door, he glanced back, and said, "Have I ever let you down?"

"Just stay away from the champagne!"

Noting that the Duke had been cornered on the other side of the room, Jamieson signaled to the mustached waiter for two glasses of the bubbly beverage. The man in the black uniform promptly complied, and Jamieson took a crystal glass for the Duchess and one for himself.

Sleek and debonair in his tuxedo, Jamieson took a sip and said, "Ah, 1961 Baron de Roth. A particular favorite of mine."

"You know your champagne, Mr. Jamieson," said the Duchess.
"My favorite pastime is admiring works of art," he raised his glass. "A toast to you, Duchess."

Blushing slightly, she said, "Thank you, Mr. Jamieson."

A beautiful woman in her early thirties, she was some fifteen years younger than the Duke. With rich, deep brown hair, dark eyes, and a striking face, she garnered attention wherever she traveled. Tonight, dressed in a low-cut black gown that showed off the dazzling Highland emerald, she was more stunning than ever.

Stuart Jamieson glanced around the Grand Ballroom, a large, ornate two-story room that was filled with hundreds of guests. Almost half the men wore strict male Highland dress, completely outfitted in colorful kilts, black dress jackets and bow ties, and sporrons, the leather and hide pouches that hung from their waists. The women, who proudly displayed their diamonds and rubies and pearls, were seen in either tartan skirts of silk or evening gowns with tartan sashes draped from one shoulder.

The orchestra up on the small stage began to play, and Jamieson said, "A delightful party."

As he spoke, Stuart eyed the mustached waiter, who lingered a moment too long staring at the brilliant green emerald that hung from the Duchess' neck. Keeping his eyes on the servant, Jamieson took another sip of his champagne. The other man's manner and bearing were perfect — yet he could still be one of Tarkovsky's men. A pistol could easily be concealed in his deep pockets, a knife up his sleeve.

"You have a great many admirers tonight," said Jamieson.

"Admirers of me or of this?" The Duchess touched the stone. "It is beautiful, isn't it?"

And it was. Suspended by a gold necklace, the Highland emerald was of stunning quality and almost shocking size. From his research this afternoon, Jamieson knew that stones of this top-quality designation were exceedingly rare. Any such emerald larger than two or three carats — let alone of the Highland's magnitude — was far more valuable than a diamond of comparable weight and quality.

Jamieson focused on a blonde in a red tartan sash, who stood in the corner smoking and staring at the Duchess. Suddenly a tall man of obvious strength appeared to his right. With dark, smooth hair and dark eyes, he wore a kilt of blue and green tartan, a velvet coat cut with tails, a black bow tie, and a sporran.

"Duchess," murmured the man, nodding his head.

"Mr. Cambell, what a surprise. I certainly didn't expect you to show up on our behalf."

Jamieson moved closer to the Duchess when he glanced down and spotted a knife tucked into the top of the man's right stocking. Known as a sgian dubh, the knife was also part of proper Highland dress, yet the sight of it made Jamieson uncomfortable.

The Duchess exchanged a few pleasantries with Mr. Cambell, then as quickly as possible ended the conversation. She turned to Jamieson and let out a sigh of relief.

"Who is that?" Stuart glanced over his shoulder at the man, who was now slipping on a pair of glasses.

"One of our neighbors in the Highlands. Our families made war against each other for centuries, and they still claim rights to our castle." She shook her head. "I truly didn't expect to see him here tonight."

"That's good to know."

As Jamieson's eyes followed Mr. Cambell, he again noticed the blonde woman, still smoking and studying the Duchess and her jewels. When the woman saw Jamieson watching her, she quickly turned, stubbed out her cigarette, and melted into the crowd.

A continuous stream of people floated by the Duchess, virtually everyone admiring the famed emerald. The Duke, a big man with a reddish beard, a kilt of yellow and black tartan, and a fancy jacket ornamented with silver buttons, stopped by for only moments before being whisked off to meet an ambassador.

"What a pleasant surprise!" exclaimed the Duchess to a handsome woman and her guest, who wore a tartan of red, blue, and green. "How nice to see you, Lady Elizabeth. You simply must visit us soon."

"It would be a delight." She squeezed the hand of her guest, an attractive, silver-haired man in a kilt. "Allow me to present Thomas Sinclair. A recent acquaintance, but already a dear friend. We seem to do nothing but laugh, don't we, Tommy?"

"She's the only one who appreciates my jokes, you see. I think we were made for each other." He bowed his head toward the Duchess. "It's a great
pleasure to meet you."

As the three of them conversed, Stuart Jamieson’s attention was caught by a large, thick-chested man lingering nearby. Dressed in a tuxedo with a red and blue tartan handkerchief in his coat pocket, he eyed the Duchess and her emerald, then stepped over to the mustached waiter. Wasting not an instant, Jamieson moved in their direction and caught a bit of what they were saying.

"... that rock’s even bigger than I thought," said the large man.

The waiter was about to speak when he spotted Jamieson moving toward them. Appearing suddenly worried, the waiter jabbed his hand in his pocket and pulled out a small item.

"Here are the matches you requested, sir," he said, and then quickly moved on.

Was it possible, wondered Jamieson that these two would attempt to lure for the emerald in the middle of this crowd? Could they be armed? Quite possibly, and with this realization Jamieson edged closer to the Duchess. Due to the number of people, probably the only way to steal the emerald and escape would be to take a hostage.

The Duchess and another friend, the Countess of Bain, strolled up to the low stage and complimented the orchestra. Right behind them, Jamieson saw the blonde woman once again appear and disappear. Then the mustached waiter broke through a group of people and headed directly for the Duchess and the Countess. Fearing an attempt, the secret agent stepped between the waiter and the wooden stairs that led up to the stage.

Blocking the women from the servant, Jamieson casually said, "Would either of you care for another glass of champagne?"

The face of the Duchess lit up. "Why, yes, I...

Suddenly the ballroom fell entirely black, and Jamieson’s body went rigid. From the hundreds of guests rose a large moan, and after the rumble peaked and subsided, a large scream pierced the air.

"Help!"

Stuart Jamieson recognized the voice of the Duchess and he moved to protect her. But a foot rammed into his stomach. He stumbled back in the darkness, falling into another guest.

"The emerald!" screamed the Duchess. "Mr. Jamieson, help!"

Hurling blindly into the crowd, he found the Duchess and realized there were two or three people swirling around her. Presuming that at least one if not all were Tarkovsky's people, he brought his fist back and punched one, then shoved others away. A crashing of glass. Screams. Yelling. Out of nowhere, a heavy fist smashed into Jamieson's jaw. He stumbled to the side, grabbed someone, and heaved them back.

"No!" shouted the Duchess, obviously in a struggle. There was a loud smack as she struck someone. "Get away from me!"

Stuart Jamieson grabbed someone by the shoulder, spun the person around, brought back his fist, and hurled it forward. A moment later there was a slight gasp as a body crumpled to the floor.

The Duchess screamed, "Help! They have the emerald!"

From far across the blackened ballroom, the baritone voice of the Duke boomed, "Someone help her!"

Jamieson grabbed a man by his velvet-clad shoulder. That person karate-chopped Jamieson twice, once on the neck and once in the stomach, then pushed him back.

Stuart swung his fist, and his hard knuckles landed squarely on a jaw. There was a deep groan and the body fell away, collapsing in the dark. Jamieson lunged for the person but missed. Hearing the desperate steps of the thief, he took off in pursuit.

"Over there!" yelled the Duchess.

Jamieson knocked someone down, jumped over another, then plowed through a group of frightened guests. He paused a moment, thought he'd lost the thief, then heard him running to the right. Jamieson pushed on through the blackened ballroom.

"There's someone trying to escape," he shouted into the dark. "Can anyone tell me where?"

A woman to his left shouted, "Over here, I think. Someone just rushed past me."

Jamieson pressed on as best he could. If he remembered correctly, there was a large hall that led from this ballroom into an adjoining one. That would mean certain escape, with no way to catch the thief after that. He had to hurry.

Suddenly, the lights burst on. There was a collective sigh of relief from the guests, and Jamieson found himself staring into the large hallway that did indeed lead to the next ballroom. To his good fortune, though, it was a dead
end — the doors at the opposite end were locked. Blocking the way back out into the main ballroom, Jamieson stared into the space, entirely pleased with his good fortune.

"Well, well, well, isn't this interesting."

Cornered in the dead-end hallway were five people, all of whom Stuart Jamieson recognized. If he couldn't deduce who had stolen the gem, then a bodily search of each of these people would certainly reveal the Highland emerald.

"What are you talking about?" said Mr. Cambell, one of the five suspects, fidgeting with his glasses. "What's happening?"

"Yes, what are you talking about?" said Lady Elizabeth, who stood next to him in the hallway. She glanced to her side and spotted her companion, Thomas Sinclair. "Ah, there you are, my dear."

"Elizabeth, I had no idea you attended such wild parties — how wonderful!" said Sinclair with a laugh. "Let's find the champagne. I'm parched!"

"Jamieson shook his head. "Not so fast. I'm afraid I must detain you for a while."

Two agents from outside arrived to make sure none of the suspects slipped away. Aside from Mr. Cambell, Lady Elizabeth, and Thomas Sinclair, Stuart Jamieson also recognized the blonde woman with the red tartan sash. Hesitant to give her name, she finally identified herself as Liza McDonnell.

"I didn't steal the bloody emerald," she said as she lit up a cigarette. "This evening has been a fiasco and I want to leave."

"Not just yet," said Jamieson. "I have to question all of you first."

Charles Brodie — the large man in the tuxedo who'd spoken with the waiter — was equally gruff. He claimed to be a reporter for one of the less reputable newspapers, but his press identification was incomplete.

"This is preposterous!" he stated, wiping his brow with his red tartan handkerchief. "Of course I'm a journalist."

Jamieson was about to begin questioning the others when another agent came up to him.

"The Duchess wishes to speak to you," he reported. "Apparently there's some evidence."

"How comforting."

Once he was satisfied that his suspects were well guarded, Jamieson cut across the ballroom and found the Duke and Duchess of Leith. The two of them stood at the base of the oak staircase that led to the stage. Scattered across the steps and floor in front of them was an odd assortment of items.

"Mr. Jamieson, look!" exclaimed the resourceful Duchess, pointing downward. "When I was attacked, I took hold of the thief! All this belongs to whoever stole the emerald!"

The Duke asked, "Will it help you find the emerald?"

Jamieson knelt down at the base of the steps. His eyes quickly scanned the objects: a crystal vase, strewn flowers, and a variety of other clues. He noticed one item, which indicated ... wait, he thought. No. That couldn't belong to ... but, yes!

"Yes," he said, rising, "this clinches it. You did a wonderful job, Duchess. These clues all point to one person — the one who stole the Highland emerald!"

WHO STOLE THE EMERALD?
THE SOLUTION:

By bluffing up a struggle, the Duress has caused the Assistant to drop several essential clues.

"Confidentially, it's only a matter of deduction, explaining Stuart Jameson.

Jameson was still confusing on the streets and took Jameson con.

We know there was a brick on the floor, and took Jameson con.

"Where's the Duke?" "How do you know this?"

"By the sound of material, of course.

Jameson grew over and carefully picked up a piece of ash.

I just rescued the stopwatch.

Of our fire escapes, still the winding stair to some sort. Mr. Bodge was stuck.

And still the comics — Mr. Campbell, Lady Elisabetta, Thomas Squirrel, and Lisa McDowell — were winding their steps of fresh secrets.

Aimless was quick, however, to eliminate the two women as likely suspects.

"Why, sir?" said the Duke. "After all, your security people said it wasn't the police."

Jameson pointed his index finger square.

"Yes, of course, but the real problem is the bricks," he exclaimed.

Jameson let his tobacco roll by his head.

The floor was black with ash.

Jameson turned for the door, but barely made it out.

"Yes, and for the third time we're thinking the effects of a Toxikovit.

"At least I leave the family look."

"As usual, Mr. Bodge because he's winding a suspicious After all, his name is nothing with which to be threatened."

"Whereas, or Thomas Squirrel. Jameson had no choice but to speak of truth.

But speak clearly, as there is only one logical conclusion:

Thomas Squirrel.

Contrary with the evidence, Thomas Squirrel gained the clues.

When asked how, Jameson just said the Toxikovit is a wild weapon.

"You were making no impression on Twebble's pill."

"And you, as well.

Jameson sneered at him flatly and said, "You were easy to fell.

And seeing the advantages, of course.

Second after, Thomas Squirrel demonstrated that the clues could go more than the expected. With a tightening fist, he held two spade's stake and gun.

and seeing out a pack of fool.

When the pills were tasted on the Duress's mouth and said,