

# Dan's Letter™

“Please...let me introduce you to my mind...one article at a time.”



## FROM THE DESK OF DAN ANDERSON

### Slow Down Before Life Runs You Over

Slow down? In America, that sounds like advice from a man selling hammocks, herbal tea, and unemployment.

But here's the odd truth: rushing is expensive.

Your brain was not designed to juggle email, dinner, traffic, and tomorrow's imaginary disaster circus all at once. Do that long enough and the alarm center takes over while the thinking part goes out for a sandwich.

Presence does the opposite. It steadies your nerves, sharpens attention, and lets you notice what most people miss: the tone in a voice, the hesitation before an answer.

So try this radical, dangerous experiment: pause. Breathe before answering. Walk without auditioning for the Olympics. Listen like the other person isn't background noise.

You may discover time expands, people soften, and life feels richer when you stop sprinting past it.

- Dan A.



## Rethinking Summer Travel: The Simple Escape Most People Overlook



Every summer, people spend thousands chasing the perfect vacation. Airports become crowded, hotels become overpriced, and what was supposed to feel relaxing often turns into another stressful production with luggage, schedules, delays, and endless lines.

**Meanwhile, some of the best summer experiences are happening much closer to home.**

More Americans are discovering that getting on the water delivers something most vacations no longer do: actual peace and quiet. A few hours on a boat can completely change the pace of a day. Phones get put away. Conversations return. Families reconnect. Stress starts to fade into the background instead of riding shotgun the entire trip.

There's a reason so many people feel different near water. Studies continue to show that being on the water helps reduce stress, lower cortisol levels, and create a calmer mental state. In a world where most people are constantly connected to screens, notifications, and nonstop noise, that kind of reset has become incredibly valuable.

And boating is no longer limited to people who own expensive yachts or waterfront property. In fact, many people are surprised to discover

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how accessible it has become.

One of the easiest ways to get started is simply renting a boat. Many lakes, rivers, and coastal areas offer hourly or daily rentals that let people enjoy the experience without ownership. Most rental locations provide basic instruction, safety guidance, and recommendations on where to explore, making the process much less intimidating than people expect.

Boat clubs have also become increasingly popular. Instead of owning a boat outright, members pay a monthly fee for access to different types of boats throughout the season. The club handles maintenance, cleaning, storage, and upkeep. Members simply reserve a boat and head out on the water. For many families, it creates the lifestyle of boating without the headaches traditionally associated with ownership.

For beginners, boating classes and on-water training programs are another smart option. Many locations now offer lessons, youth programs, and hands-on training designed to help newcomers feel comfortable and confident.

Like anything else, the learning curve becomes much easier once someone gets a little experience under their belt.

And for those considering ownership down the road, there are now online tools that simplify the process dramatically.

Buyers can compare boat types, estimate financing, and research certified manufacturers that meet safety and construction standards.

The entire industry has become far more approachable than it was years ago.

What makes boating especially appealing today is that it offers something many people feel they're losing: uninterrupted time together. Kids remember summers spent near the water. Couples reconnect. Friends slow down long enough to actually enjoy each other's company again.

That may be why so many Americans continue returning to the water year after year.

*It's not just recreation. It's relief.*

This summer, the best escape may not require a plane ticket, a resort reservation, or a week off work.

**Sometimes the smartest vacation is the one sitting quietly just a few miles from home.**

## How to Host a Backyard BBQ

Most backyard BBQs fail for one simple reason: the host tries too hard. Suddenly one guy is juggling burgers, chasing flies away from potato salad, and frantically asking if anybody's seen the ketchup like it's a missing child.

The best BBQs feel effortless.

Keep the food simple and dependable. Burgers, sausages, chicken, and a few vegetable skewers handle almost every guest without turning your backyard into a stressed-out restaurant kitchen. Prep marinades and sauces ahead of time so you



can actually enjoy the party instead of sweating over the grill like a man working parole duty.

Create a comfortable setup with cold drinks, shaded seating, music, and a few lawn games to keep people relaxed and talking. Keep your grilling tools nearby and your cooler stocked with ice and water.

And always keep a fire extinguisher close. Every family has at least one relative who believes lighter fluid is measured by the gallon.

Do it right and guests won't remember just the food. *They'll remember how good it felt being there.*

# The Scarlet Veil

## A Victor Sage Mystery

by Dan Anderson

 [Listen to the narrated version Chapter 9](#)

### Chapter 9 The Wardrobe Mistress

Inspector Sterling remained in the corridor outside Helena Davenport's dressing room, staring toward the stair that climbed into the upper works of the Lyceum. The sound they had heard had vanished, swallowed by the old theatre as neatly as a whispered cue. Victor Sage did not follow it. He stood with one hand upon his walking stick, eyes lifted toward the darkness above.

"You heard it," Sterling said.

"I did," Sage replied. "If that footstep wished to be caught, it would have been less careful. If not, it has chosen its way out. I prefer not to let it arrange my movements."

Sterling frowned. "Then what now?"

"Now," Sage said, "we keep the appointment I arranged before entering Miss Davenport's room."

Clara closed her notebook. "Mrs. Lorrimer?"

"Yes. I sent word to her lodging before we came here. If she has any sense of self-preservation, she will have entered by the wardrobe passage and avoided the front of the house."

Sterling gave him a sharp look. "You summoned a witness to an empty theatre after dark?"

"I summoned a wardrobe mistress to her own kingdom," Sage replied. "There is a difference. Besides, Inspector, if she refused to come, that would have told us one thing. If she came quickly, it would tell us another."

"And what does it tell you?"

"That she has been waiting for someone to ask the correct question."

They found Beatrice Lorrimer below the stage, in the wardrobe room where the Lyceum kept its borrowed lives. She had not been working there by chance. Her cloak lay across the back of a chair, still damp at the shoulders, and her gloves rested beside a ring of wardrobe keys. She had come in haste, but not unprepared.

The chamber was narrow, warm from an iron stove, and crowded with gowns, cloaks, gloves, aprons, hats, sashes, and military coats arranged in solemn ranks. In the half-light, the costumes

seemed less like garments than silent bodies waiting for breath. Beatrice stood beneath a shaded lamp, folding cream lace with hands that did not tremble.

“Mr. Sage. Inspector. Miss Simmons,” she said. “Your note was unusually spare.”

“I find brevity useful when summoning the cautious.”

“I came because you mentioned the veil.”

“Then I chose the right word.”

Sterling stepped nearer the table. “We have more questions.”

“I assumed as much,” Beatrice replied. “Dead women rarely leave tidy answers.”

Sage took the folded scarlet fragment from his pocket and placed it upon the worktable. Beatrice looked at it once before returning her gaze to him.

“You recognize it,” Sage said.

“I recognize the color.”

“That is not the same thing.”

“No,” she replied. “It is safer.”

Clara watched the woman’s hands. They had gone still, pressed flat against the table’s edge.

“This fragment appears to have come from Miss Davenport’s veil,” Sage said. “Was that veil part of the Lyceum’s wardrobe?”

“No,” Beatrice said. “It came from no supplier we use and no theatrical house I know. Stage silk is chosen for distance. It must catch light, hold shape, and survive nervous fingers. That veil was different. Too fine. Too deliberate.”

“Deliberate in what sense?” Clara asked.

“In the sense that it had been made to be understood by a few and admired by everyone else. Miss Davenport wanted it because it would draw every eye in the house. I disliked it because it would draw the wrong eyes.”

Sage touched the edge of the silk. “The serpent’s eye.”

The room tightened around the phrase. Beatrice turned away, lifted a dark velvet cloak from a chair, then laid it down again.

“I have seen many symbols stitched into foolish garments,” she said. “Crowns on girls who could not govern a teacup. Daggers on cowards. Roses on women with the manners of thistles. But that mark was not foolish.”

“Because you knew it,” Sage said.

Beatrice did not answer.

Sterling's voice hardened. "Mrs. Lorrimer, a woman is dead. This is no time for loyalty to theatre gossip."

She turned on him with sudden fire. "Do not speak to me of loyalty, Inspector. I have dressed actresses praised from private boxes and ruined before breakfast. Theatre gossip is sometimes the only record the powerful fail to burn."

Sterling held her gaze, then let the moment pass. Sage spoke more quietly. "Then give us the record."

Beatrice stood motionless for several seconds. Above them, a rope creaked against a pulley. Her eyes lifted toward it before returning to Sage.

"At the Lyceum," she said, "there are patrons whose names are printed on invitations, and patrons whose names are never written at all. They finance productions. They place girls in roles. They rescue reputations when it suits them, and bury them when it does not."

"A society?" Clara asked.

"A circle," Beatrice said. "That is the safer word. A circle has no corners, no beginning, no end, and no single point where blame may rest."

Sage watched her closely. "The Serpent's Eye."

She did not deny it.

"Who belongs to it?" Sterling asked.

"Men who prefer not to be named by women who prefer not to vanish."

Sage let the silk fragment fall back upon the table. "Was Helena Davenport part of this circle?"

Beatrice's mouth tightened. "No woman is part of such a thing in the way men are part of it. Women are invited near it. Used by it. Favored by it. Threatened by it. Occasionally rewarded. More often reminded."

"Was Helena favored?" Clara asked.

"At first," Beatrice said. "Helena knew that applause is not always earned from the stage. Sometimes it is arranged before the curtain rises. A word from the right box can do more for a career than ten years of honest talent."

"And she accepted such help?" Sterling asked.

"Do not make her smaller than she was," Beatrice said. "Helena accepted advantage when advantage came wearing a silk hat. But knowing a trap is a trap does not always stop one from stepping near it."

"When did she bring you the veil?" Sage asked.

"Six weeks before opening. It came in a flat case with no label and no bill. She carried it herself. Anything Helena carried herself had value or danger."

"Did she say who sent it?"

“Only that it had come from someone who enjoyed being remembered.”

“Sir Alistair?” Sterling asked.

Beatrice’s eyes flickered. “Sir Alistair enjoys survival more than boldness. He may know the men who sent it. I doubt he sent it himself.”

“And Edmund Pike?” Sage asked.

The name changed her face.

“You distrust Pike,” Clara said.

“I distrust men who know every locked door and pretend that makes them servants,” Beatrice replied. “Pike controls movement. Calls. Messages. Timing. A stage manager can do more damage with a delayed cue than another man can do with a knife.”

“Would Pike have known the veil was not theatre stock?” Sage asked.

“He would have known if Helena wanted it kept private. Pike has a talent for hearing anything that gives him power later.”

“Power over whom?” Sterling asked.

“Everyone who confuses backstage shadows with secrecy.”

Sage let the silence stretch. “Mrs. Lorrimer, did you ever receive anything bearing the serpent’s eye?”

Beatrice’s hand moved to the lace, then stopped. “No.”

Sage sighed softly. “That was not worthy of you. A lie has a texture, Mrs. Lorrimer. Yours was coarse.”

For a moment she seemed ready to refuse him. Then she crossed to a narrow cabinet, took a key from the chain at her waist, and opened the lower drawer. From it she withdrew a cream card and placed it before Sage.

The card bore no written name. At the top, pressed faintly into the paper, was an eye circled by curling ivy, the serpent worked so delicately into the design that a careless glance might mistake it for ornament. In the lower corner, written in a small precise hand, were two words: Admit one.

“An invitation,” Clara said.

“Yes,” Beatrice replied. “Years ago. To a private supper after a benefit performance. I did not go. Two weeks later, my position disappeared without explanation. The woman who advised me to ignore the card was dismissed as well. Her daughter had a fine voice. Within a year, no one would hire her.”

Clara looked at her quietly. “That is why you feared the veil.”

“That is why I knew it was not merely a veil.”

Sage replaced the invitation on the table. “Did Helena know your history with the Serpent’s

Eye?”

“No. Or if she did, she never said.”

“But she asked you about silk remembering who touched it.”

Beatrice looked startled. “How did you—?”

“You told us enough.”

She sat slowly, suddenly less formidable than tired. “She did ask that. I told her silk remembers stains poorly and everything else not at all. Then I told her some stains do not show until heat is applied.”

Sage’s eyes sharpened. “Heat.”

“An old wardrobe trick,” Beatrice said. “Certain treatments appear under warmth or steam. Not magic. Chemistry. Cheap theatre men call it clever. Good wardrobe women call it trouble.”

“Could poison be hidden that way?” Sterling asked.

“I know cloth, Inspector. I do not know murder.”

“But someone who knew both,” Sage said, “could make a veil appear harmless until the proper moment.”

Beatrice looked at the scarlet fragment. “Or until it touched the proper place.”

The room fell quiet. Above them, the gallery floor gave the faintest sound. This time it was not the settling of rope. It was a step.

Sterling moved first, but Sage caught his sleeve lightly. “No,” Sage said quietly, his eyes fixed upward. “Let him believe he has heard enough.”

Beatrice whispered, “You think someone followed you here?”

“No,” Sage said. “I think someone was already here.”

Another soft step moved above the wardrobe room, slow and careful, then stopped directly overhead. Beatrice looked from the ceiling to Sage.

“Powerful men do not leave fingerprints, Mr. Sage.”

Sage glanced at the serpent’s eye pressed into the card. “No,” he said. “They leave invitations.”

The floor above them creaked...again.

**To be continued...**

**Missed a chapter? - [Tap here for the Kindle version and audiobook.](#)**



## PLAYBOOK >

# The Fortune Is in the Follow-Up

Could a business owner be losing money quietly, politely, and repeatedly...yes indeed.

A prospect calls. A form comes in. Someone asks for a price. The owner answers once, maybe twice, then disappears because the person did not instantly book, pay, and fall to the floor in gratitude.

Then business slows down and the owner says he needs more leads. Maybe.

But often he needs to stop wasting the leads he already has.

***The money is often not in the first contact. It is in the follow-up.***

Customers are busy. They forget. They get distracted. They mean to respond and then life throws a wrench, a bill, a sick kid, a noisy truck, or a phone full of tiny digital emergencies at them. Your estimate may matter, but it is not the only thing shouting for attention.

So silence does not always mean no.

It may mean later.

It may mean remind me.

It may mean I am interested, but I need a nudge before this disappears under 37 other problems.

That is where follow-up earns its keep.

The average service business treats follow-up like begging. Wrong. Good follow-up is not begging. It is leadership. It reminds the customer of the problem, gives him the next step, and makes action easier.



Bad follow-up sounds nervous. No follow-up sounds like you never wanted the job.

And that is how competitors win.

***Follow-up converts interest into money.***

The painful part is that you already paid for that lead. You paid with ads, website work, reputation, phone time, estimating, photos, messages, and mental energy. Then you let it go cold because there is no simple system.

That is not marketing. That is leaving cash on the table and walking away.

A service business should have follow-up messages ready before the lead arrives. One after the estimate. One the next day. One a few days later. One before the offer expires. One later with a different reason to respond.

Simple. Human. Direct.

A good follow-up might say:

*"I know life gets busy, so I wanted to circle back. Did you still want help with this, or should I close it out on my end?"*

That creates a decision. People ignore open loops, but they notice closing doors.

***A business without follow-up is not under-marketed. It is under-managed.***

For more business-building lessons like this, grab the **FREE Special Edition of Mobility Marketer Insider™** at [mobilitymarketer.com](http://mobilitymarketer.com).

# What They Didn't Tell You

Every year, corporate executives make decisions that cost their companies millions of dollars. Most of those mistakes are quietly forgotten. But one executive came within a whisker of making a mistake so spectacular that people would still be talking about it seventy years later.

The project had trouble written all over it from the beginning. Costs kept climbing. The network wasn't exactly enthusiastic. Industry insiders predicted failure with the confidence of a man who just checked tomorrow's weather forecast after already seeing tomorrow. Some executives were even betting on how much money the show would lose during its first year. Nobody was discussing success. The debate was merely about the size of the disaster.

Then came premiere night.

The cast gathered together to watch the first broadcast. This should have been a joyous occasion. Instead, it felt like relatives gathering in a hospital waiting room. The show aired. Nobody laughed. Nobody smiled. Nobody offered words of encouragement. When it was over, the room emptied in near silence. Everyone simply went home, carrying the same unpleasant thought: this thing is doomed.

The next morning, the sponsor's president reached his limit. He picked up the phone and called his advertising agency. He wanted out. The show was silly, unfunny and boring. Why continue pouring money into a sinking ship?

Fortunately, one executive at the agency refused to surrender. He pleaded for one more chance. Just one more airing. One more week. If the audience still rejected it, then everyone could walk away knowing they had tried.

For reasons nobody can fully explain, the sponsor agreed.

One more episode.

That decision changed television history.

Viewers slowly discovered the show. Ratings began climbing. Then they climbed some more. Before long, the program became a national obsession. The stars became household names. Decades later, people were still watching reruns, laughing at jokes first delivered in black and white.

Which means one frustrated executive came within inches of cancelling one of the most beloved television shows ever created before it had the chance to find its audience.

The show was...

*I Love Lucy.*

**Now you know what they didn't tell you.**



# DETAILING MASTERY



SCAN OR TAP BELOW FOR VIDEO



Tap here

## Brown Tires, Black Magic?

A funny thing happens when a car gets clean. Suddenly the wheels start looking like they belong on a different vehicle. Brown tires, baked-on brake dust, and grime hiding in every corner have a way of making even a sharp-looking car appear tired and neglected.

One minute the wheels look like they survived a cross-country dust storm. The next, they look ready for a showroom floor and a spotlight.

The transformation is enough to make neighbors suspicious and convince passersby that a newer car has magically appeared in the driveway.

Scan or tap the QR code for the video.



# TAKE A BREAK!



## BBQ Chicken Bacon Pineapple Kabobs

### Ingredients

- 2 large chicken breasts cut into 1 1/2" – 2" chunks, salted lightly
- 1 1/2 cups BBQ sauce
- 1 lb bacon cut into 1" - 1 1/2" segments
- fresh pineapple cut into 2" chunks

### Instructions

Combine chicken pieces with 1 cup of the BBQ sauce and marinate for 2-3 hours. Cook bacon to how crispy you like it. Let bacon cool slightly. Using wooden skewers previously soaked in water for at least 1 hour (or metal skewers!) thread chicken, bacon pieces and pineapple in a pattern. The larger pieces of pineapple are easier to skewer.

Fold thin bacon pieces over in half and arrange next to the chicken, being careful to not put the bacon pieces too close to anything else, so that they have space to heat up properly to cook.

Grill kabobs until chicken reaches 155-160 degrees F. Slather remaining 1/2 cup of BBQ sauce on kabobs when they're nearly cooked.

Cover loosely with foil and let sit for 5-10 minutes before serving.

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9	8	4			1			
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Tap here FOR INTERACTIVE PUZZLE

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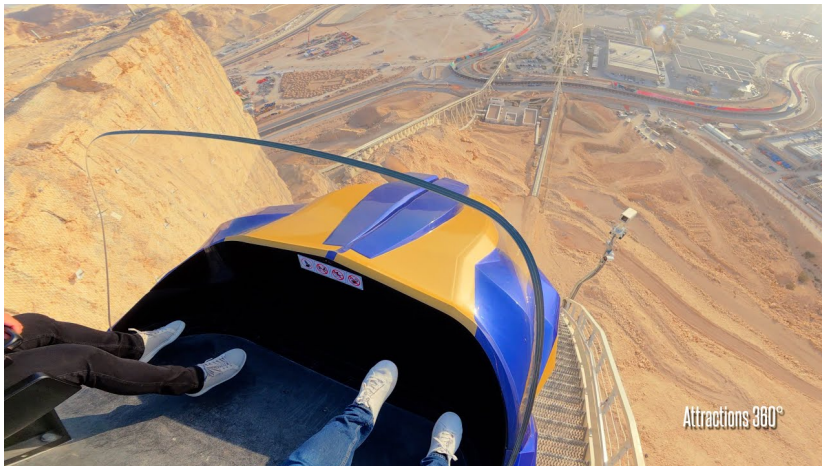
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### SOLUTION

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6	5	3	4	9	8	1	2	7	
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5	3	6	8	4	9	2	7	1	
7	1	1	2	6	5	3	8	4	9



## Falcon's Flight World Record Roller Coaster



Check out  
**Dan's Blog™**



TAP  
Here

There are roller coasters, and then there are machines that seem to have escaped from the sketchbook of an ambitious dreamer. Falcon's Flight rises above the desert on a scale that defies common sense, climbing skyward before unleashing a rush of speed that turns cliffs, valleys, and distant horizons into a single breathtaking blur. The track stretches for miles across rugged terrain, weaving through a landscape that feels more like a science fiction frontier than an amusement park. One moment brings anticipation, the next delivers pure velocity, leaving gravity struggling to keep pace with imagination.