

VUKCIC, MARKO

Wolfe's life-long friend and one of only three men who call him "Nero"; owner and Chef de Cuisine of Rusterman's Restaurant; one of the Les Quinze Maitres; former husband of Dina Laszio.

NB: "Vuk" means "wolf" in Serbo-Croatian. "Vukcic" means "little wolf" (or possibly "young wolf"). According to Rex Stout, the name is pronounced to rhyme with "book-sitch" [McAlear].

WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT HIM:

Archie says:

- dines at Wolfe's once a month [ch. 1, COOK]
- "one of only two men whom Wolfe called by their first names, apart from employees." [ch. 1, COOK]
- "not fat but huge, like a lion upright on its hind legs, with no hat covering his dense tangle of hair" [ch. 1, COOK]
- "the only man in New York who called Wolfe by his first name" [ch. 6, BEST]
- "...he was one of the only ten men I knew of that Nero Wolfe called by their first names...for years he had dined once a month at Wolfe's table, and Wolfe and I had dined once a month at his restaurant...he and Wolfe had been boys together in Montenegro... [ch. 1, BLCK]
- "...as far as I knew Marko hadn't wasted time discussing his relations with women; he just went ahead and enjoyed them." [ch. 1, BLCK]

Wolfe says:

- "Marko!...I've often told you that's your worse habit. When you argue with yourself, do it inside your head; don't pretend it's me you're persuading and shout platitudes at me." [ch. 12, COOK]
- "I have affection for Marko Vukcic. I hunted dragonflies with him in the mountains." [ch. 12, Cooks]-
"Marko was himself headstrong, gullible, over sanguine, and naive." [ch. 2, BLCK]

Felix says:

- "He was hard about the work, hard and sometimes rough, and he could roar, but he was a great man." [ch. 2, BLCK]

- "I will not say that to him a woman was more important than a sauce -- he could not be accused of ever neglecting a sauce -- but he had a warm eye for women." [ch. 2, BLCK]

STORIES:

COOK (1938): Takes Archie to Kanawha as his guest. He was married to Dina Rossi for five years before Phillip Laszio stole her. He hits Laszio in the eye with a hunk of bread when Laszio makes snide remarks about the clientele of Rusterman's. He and Wolfe quarrel when Wolfe sees him slipping back into Dina's clutches.

NQDE (1942): In passim [ch. 4].

WOMN (1947): In passim.

Omit (1948): Worked at Mondor's in Paris in his youth.

ANDB (1948): Drops in, as he sometimes does, for a Sunday-evening snack [ch. 14]

BEST (1950): Holds Wolfe's power of attorney when Wolfe disappears.

BLCK (1954): A year previously, Marko moved out of his quarters on the third floor of Rusterman's and into his own apartment on East 54th Street. On the evening of Thursday, March 18, 1954, Marko is shot and killed by Peter Zov outside his apartment [ch. 1]. Marko has been the leading figure in an American organization supporting a Montenegrin resistance group known as the Spirit of the Black Mountain and Zov, an agent of Tito's government, was sent from Belgrade to assassinate him.

NB: Archie says that Marko is "a wealthy man and a widower" [ch. 1, TBM]. Marko is divorced from Dina Rossi Laszio, but I can't find any other reference to a deceased wife.

QUOTATIONS:

"Nero, you damn old hermit! I am not a turtle in aspic, like you." [ch. 1, COOK]

"...they thought because I had been dancing with Dina my blood was warm. It was warm... You wouldn't understand that Nero. With a woman like that. She has a fire in her that warmed me once, and it could again, no doubt of that, if it came near and I felt it and let my head go I could throw myself in it." [of Dina Laszio, ch. 6, COOK]

"Again yesterday I had her close to me, I had her in my arms. It isn't her tricks, I'm on to all her tricks,, it's the mere fact of what she is. You wouldn't see that, Nero, or feel it, it wouldn't have any effect on you, because you've put yourself behind a barricade. As you say, a hole in the ice is dangerous only to those who go skating." [of Dina Laszio, ch. 12, COOK]

"My friend, my poor young friend." [to Archie, ch. 6, BEST]

"I wish to remind you that I have known Nero a much longer time than you have. We knew each other as boys in another country--much younger than you were that day many years ago when you first saw him and went to work for him. He is my old and dear friend, and I am his. So it was natural that he should come to me last night.'

"Sure,' I agreed. 'Why not?'

"You must feel no pique. No courroux.'

"Okay. I'll fight it down.' [Marko & Archie, ch. 6, BEST]

"Listen, Archie, I have a power of attorney without limit. Bring me a check for five thousand dollars at your convenience. I am stealing it from my old friend Nero to spend on beautiful women or olive oil." [ch. 10, BEST]

Lovinbabe

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