

LEACH. Well then, say he's cleaning his clubs. Lady T calls him. They have a row, he loses his temper and bashes her with the club he just happens to be holding.

BATTLE. That doesn't account for the drugging of Mary Aldin. And she was drugged, the doctor says so. Of course, she could have drugged herself.

LEACH. Why?

(BATTLE turns to TREVES.)

BATTLE. Is there any possible motive in Miss Aldin's case?

TREVES. Lady Tressilian left her a legacy - not a very large one - a few hundreds a year. As I told you, Lady Tressilian had very little personal fortune.

BATTLE. A few hundreds a year.

TREVES. I agree. An inadequate motive.

BATTLE. *(Sighing.)* Well, let's see the first wife. Jim, get Mrs. Audrey Strange.

(LEACH exits.)

There's something peculiar about this business, sir. A mixture of cold premeditation and unpremeditated violence, and the two don't mix.

TREVES. Exactly, Battle. The drugging of Miss Aldin suggests premeditation -

BATTLE. And the way the murder was carried out looks as though it was done in a fit of blind rage. Yes, sir. It's all wrong.

TREVES. Did you notice what he said about a trap?

BATTLE. *(Thoughtfully.)* "A trap."

(LEACH enters from the house and holds the door open. AUDREY follows. She is very pale but completely composed. LEACH exits back into the house, closing the door behind him.)

AUDREY. You wish to see me?

BATTLE. Yes. Please sit down, Mrs. Strange.

(AUDREY sits.)

You've already told me how you came to make the discovery, so we needn't go into that again.

AUDREY. Thank you.

BATTLE. I'm afraid, however, that I shall have to ask you several questions that you may find embarrassing. You are not compelled to answer them unless you like.

AUDREY. I don't mind. I only wish to help.

BATTLE. First of all, then, will you tell us what you did after dinner last night?

AUDREY. I was on the terrace for some time talking to Mr. Treves. Then Miss Aldin came out to say that Lady Tressilian would like to see him in her room, and I came in here. I talked to Kay and Mr. Latimer and, later, to Mr. Royde and Nevile. Then I went up to bed.

BATTLE. What time did you go to bed?

AUDREY. I think it was about half past nine. I'm not sure of the time exactly. It may have been a little later.

BATTLE. There was some sort of trouble between Mr. Strange and his wife, I believe. Were you mixed up in that?

AUDREY. Nevile behaved very stupidly. I think he was rather excited and overwrought. I left them together and went to bed. I don't know what happened after that, naturally.

BATTLE. Did you go to sleep at once?

AUDREY. No. I was reading for some little while.

BATTLE. And you heard nothing unusual during the night?

AUDREY. No, nothing. My room is on the floor above Cam - Lady Tressilian's. I wouldn't have heard anything.

(BATTLE shows AUDREY the niblick.)

BATTLE. I'm sorry, Mrs. Strange, we believe this was used to kill Lady Tressilian. It has been identified by Mr. Strange as his property. It also bears his fingerprints.

(AUDREY draws in a sharp breath.)

AUDREY. Oh, you - you're not suggesting that it was Nevile?

BATTLE. Would it surprise you?

AUDREY. Very much. I'm sure you're quite wrong, if you think so. Nevile would never do a thing like that. Besides, he had no reason.

BATTLE. Not if he wanted money very urgently?

AUDREY. He wouldn't. He's not an extravagant person, he never has been. You're quite, quite wrong if you think it was Nevile.

BATTLE. You don't think he would be capable of violence in a fit of temper?

AUDREY. Nevile? Oh, no!

BATTLE. I don't want to pry into your private affairs, Mrs. Strange, but will you explain why you are here?

AUDREY. (*Surprised.*) Why? I always come here at this time.

BATTLE. But not at the same time as your ex-husband.

AUDREY. He did ask me if I'd mind.

BATTLE. It was his suggestion?

AUDREY. Oh, yes.

BATTLE. Not yours?

AUDREY. No.

BATTLE. But you agreed?

AUDREY. Yes, I agreed. I didn't feel that I could very well refuse.

BATTLE. Why not? You must have realised that it might be embarrassing?

AUDREY. Yes, I did realise that.

BATTLE. You were the injured party?

AUDREY. I beg your pardon?

BATTLE. It was you who divorced your husband?

AUDREY. Oh, I see - yes.

BATTLE. Do you feel any animosity towards him, Mrs. Strange?

AUDREY. No, none at all.

BATTLE. You have a very forgiving nature.

(**AUDREY** does not reply.)

Are you on friendly terms with the present Mrs. Strange?

AUDREY. I don't think she likes me very much.

BATTLE. Do you like her?

AUDREY. I really don't know her.

BATTLE. You are quite sure it was not your idea - this meeting?

AUDREY. Quite sure.

BATTLE. I think that's all, Mrs. Strange, thank you.

AUDREY. Thank you.

(*She rises then hesitates.*)

(*Nervously.*) I would just like to say - you think Nevile did this - that he killed her because of the money? I'm quite sure that isn't so. Nevile never cared much about money. I do know that. I was married to him for several years, you see. It - it isn't Nevile. I know my saying this isn't of any value as evidence, but I do wish you would believe it.

(*She turns quickly and exits into the house.*)

~~**BATTLE.** It's difficult to know what to make of her, sir. I've never seen anyone so devoid of emotion.~~

~~**TREVES.** H'm. She didn't show any, Battle, but it's there - some very strong emotion. I thought...but I may have been wrong -~~

~~(**MARY**, assisted by **LEACH**, enters. She wears a dressing gown and stows drowsily as she walks.)~~

~~Mary!~~

~~**BATTLE.** Miss Aldin! You shouldn't -~~

~~(**TREVES** leads her to a chair at the card table.)~~

~~**LEACH.** She insisted on seeing you, Uncle.~~