

**BATTLE.** Go on, Mr. Strange.

*(NEVILE shows signs of increasing nervousness.)*

**NEVILE.** I went up to change, as I said. I was passing Lady Tressilian's door, which was ajar, when she called, "Is that you, Nevile?" and asked me to come in. I went in and – and we chatted for a bit.

**BATTLE.** How long were you with her?

**NEVILE.** About twenty minutes, I suppose. When I left her I went to my room, changed, and hurried off. I took the latchkey with me because I expected to be late.

**BATTLE.** What time was it then?

**NEVILE.** About half past ten, I should think. I just caught the ten thirty-five ferry and went across to the Easterhead side of the river. I had a drink or two with Latimer at the hotel and watched the dancing. Then we had a game of billiards. In the end I found I'd missed the last ferry back. It goes at one-thirty. Latimer very decently got out his car and drove me home. It's fifteen miles round by road, you know.

*(He pauses.)*

We left the hotel at two o'clock and reached here at half past. Latimer wouldn't come in for a drink, so I let myself in and went straight up to bed.

*(BATTLE and TREVES exchange a glance.)*

**BATTLE.** During your conversation with Lady Tressilian was she quite normal in her manner?

**NEVILE.** Oh, yes, quite.

**BATTLE.** What did you talk about?

**NEVILE.** This and that.

**BATTLE.** Amiably?

**NEVILE.** Of course.

**BATTLE.** *(Smoothly.)* You didn't have a violent quarrel?

*(NEVILE rises, angrily.)*

**NEVILE.** What the devil do you mean?

**BATTLE.** You'd better tell the truth, Mr. Strange. I'll warn you – you were overheard.

**NEVILE.** Well, we did have a difference of opinion. She – she disapproved of my behaviour over – over Kay and – and my first wife. I may have got a bit heated, but we parted on perfectly friendly terms. *(Angrily.)* I didn't bash her over the head because I lost my temper if that's what you think.

*(BATTLE picks up the niblick.)*

**BATTLE.** Is this your property, Mr. Strange?

*(NEVILE looks it over.)*

**NEVILE.** Yes. It's one of Walter Hudson's niblicks from St. Egbert's.

**BATTLE.** This is the weapon we think was used to kill Lady Tressilian. Have you any explanation for your fingerprints being on the grip?

**NEVILE.** But of course they would be, it's my club. I've often handled it.

**BATTLE.** Any explanation, I mean, for the fact that your fingerprints show that you were the last person to have handled it?

**NEVILE.** That's not true. It can't be. Somebody could have handled it after me – someone wearing gloves.

**BATTLE.** Nobody could have handled it in the sense you mean – by raising it to strike – without blurring your own marks.

*(NEVILE stares at the niblick in sudden realisation.)*

**NEVILE.** It can't be! Oh, God!

*(There is a pause.)*

It isn't that? It simply isn't true. You think I killed her, but I didn't. I swear I didn't. There's some horrible mistake.

(**BATTLE** replaces the niblick.)

**TREVES.** Can't you think of any explanation to account for those fingerprints, Neville?

(**BATTLE** picks up the dinner jacket.)

**NEVILE.** No. No - I can't think of anything.

**BATTLE.** Can you explain why the cuffs and sleeve of this dinner jacket, your dinner jacket, are stained with blood?

(**NEVILE** speaks in a horror-stricken whisper.)

**NEVILE.** Blood? It couldn't be.

**TREVES.** You didn't, for instance, cut yourself?

(**NEVILE** rises, pushing his chair back violently.)

**NEVILE.** No - no, of course I didn't! It's fantastic, simply fantastic! It's none of it true.

**BATTLE.** The facts are true enough, Mr. Strange.

**NEVILE.** But why should I do such a dreadful thing? It's unthinkable - unbelievable. I've known Lady Tressilian all my life. Mr. Treves, you don't believe it, do you? You don't believe that I would do a thing like this?

(**BATTLE** replaces the jacket.)

**TREVES.** No, Neville, I can't believe it.

**NEVILE.** I didn't. I swear I didn't. What reason could I have?

**BATTLE.** I believe that you inherit a great deal of money on Lady Tressilian's death, Mr. Strange.

**NEVILE.** You mean, you think that...? It's ridiculous! I don't need money. I'm quite well off. You've only to enquire at my bank.

**BATTLE.** We shall check up on that. But there may be some reason why you suddenly require a large sum of money - some reason unknown to anyone except yourself.

**NEVILE.** There's nothing of the sort.

**BATTLE.** As to that, we shall see.

**NEVILE.** Are you going to arrest me?

**BATTLE.** Not yet, we propose to give you the benefit of the doubt.

**NEVILE.** (*Bitterly.*) You mean that you've made up your mind I did it, but you want to be sure of my motive so as to clinch the case against me. That's it, isn't it? My God! It's like some awful dream.

(*He looks to TREVES.*)

Like being caught in a trap and you can't get out.

(*He pauses, distraught.*)

Do you want me any more now? I'd like to - to get out by myself and think over all this. It's been rather a shock.

**BATTLE.** We've finished with you for the present, sir.

**NEVILE.** Thank you.

(*He makes for the French windows.*)

**BATTLE.** Don't go too far away, though, will you, sir?

**NEVILE.** You needn't worry. I shan't try and run away if that's what you mean.

(*He glances off.*)

I see you've taken your precautions, anyway.

(*He exits.*)

~~**LEACH.** He did it all right.~~

~~**BATTLE.** I don't know, Jim. If you want the truth, I don't like it. I don't like any of it. There's too much evidence against him. Besides, it doesn't quite fit. Lady Tressilian calls him into the room, and he goes happening to have a niblick in his hand. Why?~~

~~**LEACH.** So as to bash her over the head.~~

~~**BATTLE.** Meaning it's premeditated? All right, he's drugged Miss Aldin - but he can't count on her being asleep so soon. He couldn't count on anybody being asleep so soon.~~