

(LEACH nods and exits. BATTLE hangs the jacket on one of the chairs.)

TREVES. I'm quite sure there must be some innocent explanation, Battle, for that stained dinner jacket. Quite apart from lack of motive, Nevile is –

BATTLE. Fifty thousand pounds is a pretty good motive, sir, to my mind.

TREVES. But Nevile is well off. He's not in need of money.

BATTLE. There may be something we know nothing about, sir.

(BENSON enters from the house. He carries a small round box.)

BENSON. Pollock found the pills, sir, here you are.

(He hands the box to BATTLE.)

BATTLE. These are the things. I'll get the doctor to tell us whether they contain the same stuff that was given to Miss Aldin.

(ROYDE enters from the house.)

ROYDE. You want to see me?

BATTLE. Yes, Mr. Royde. Will you sit down, sir?

ROYDE. Rather stand.

BATTLE. Just as you like.

(BENSON takes out his notebook and pencil.)

I'd like you to answer one or two questions, if you've no objection.

ROYDE. No objection at all. Nothing to hide.

BATTLE. I understand that you have only just returned from Malaya, Mr. Royde?

ROYDE. That's right. First time I've been home for seven years.

BATTLE. You've known Lady Tressilian for a long time?

ROYDE. Ever since I was a boy.

BATTLE. Can you suggest a reason why anyone should want to kill her?

ROYDE. No.

BATTLE. How long have you known Mr. Nevile Strange?

ROYDE. Practically all my life.

BATTLE. Do you know him sufficiently well to be aware if he was worried over money?

ROYDE. No, but I shouldn't think so. Always seems to have plenty.

BATTLE. If there was any trouble like that he wouldn't be likely to confide in you?

ROYDE. Very unlikely.

BATTLE. What time did you go to bed last night, Mr. Royde?

ROYDE. Round about half past nine, I should think.

BATTLE. That seems to be very early.

ROYDE. Always go to bed early. Like to get up early.

BATTLE. I see. Your room is practically opposite Lady Tressilian's, isn't it?

ROYDE. Practically.

BATTLE. Did you go to sleep immediately when you went to bed?

ROYDE. No. Finished a detective story I was reading. Not very good – it seems to me they always –

BATTLE. Yes, yes. Were you still awake at half past ten?

ROYDE. Yes.

BATTLE. Did you – this is very important, Mr. Royde – did you hear any unusual sounds round about that time?

(ROYDE does not reply.)

I'll repeat that question. Did you –

ROYDE. There's no need. I heard you.

BATTLE. Well, Mr. Royde?

ROYDE. Heard a noise in the attic over my head, rats, I expect. Anyway, that was later.

BATTLE. I don't mean that.

(ROYDE looks at TREVES.)

ROYDE. *(Reluctantly.)* There was a bit of a rumpus.

BATTLE. What sort of rumpus?

ROYDE. Well, an argument.

BATTLE. An argument? Who was the argument between?

ROYDE. Lady Tressilian and Strange.

BATTLE. Lady Tressilian and Mr. Strange were quarrelling?

ROYDE. Well, yes. I suppose you'd call it that.

BATTLE. It's not what I would call it, Mr. Royde. Do you call it that?

ROYDE. Yes.

BATTLE. Thank you. What was this quarrel about?

ROYDE. Didn't listen. Not my business.

BATTLE. But you are quite sure they were quarrelling?

ROYDE. Sounded like it. Their voices were raised pretty high.

BATTLE. Can you place the time exactly?

ROYDE. About twenty past ten I should think.

BATTLE. Twenty past ten. You didn't hear anything else?

ROYDE. Strange slammed the door when he left.

BATTLE. You heard nothing more after that?

ROYDE. Only rats.

(He busies himself with his pipe.)

BATTLE. Never mind the rats.

(He picks up the niblick.)

Does this belong to you, Mr. Royde?

(ROYDE is engrossed with his pipe and does not reply.)

Mr. Royde!

(ROYDE looks at the niblick.)

ROYDE. No. All my clubs have got T.R. scratched on the shaft.

BATTLE. Do you know to whom it does belong?

ROYDE. No idea.

(BATTLE replaces the niblick.)

BATTLE. We shall want to take your fingerprints, Mr. Royde. Have you any objection to that?

ROYDE. Not much use objecting, is it? Your man's already done it.

(BENSON laughs quietly.)

BATTLE. Thank you, then, Mr. Royde. That's all for the present.

ROYDE. Do you mind if I go out for a bit? Feel like some fresh air. Only out on the terrace, if you want me.

BATTLE. That'll be quite all right, sir.

ROYDE. Thanks.

(ROYDE exits by the French windows.)

~~**BATTLE.** The evidence seems to be piling up against Mr. Strange, sir.~~

~~**TREVES.** It's incredible - incredible.~~

~~*(LEACH enters from the house.)*~~

~~**LEACH.** *(Jubilantly.)* The fingerprints are Neville Strange's all right.~~

~~**BATTLE.** That would seem to clinch it, Jim. He leaves his weapon, he leaves his fingerprints - I wonder he didn't leave his visiting card.~~

~~**LEACH.** Been easy, hasn't it?~~

~~**TREVES.** It can't have been Neville. There must be a mistake.~~

~~**BATTLE.** It all adds up. We'll see what Mr. Strange has to say, anyhow. Bring him in, Jim.~~

~~*(LEACH exits into the house.)*~~

~~**TREVES.** I don't understand it. I'm sure there's something wrong. Neville's not a complete and utter fool. Even if he were capable of committing such a brutal act, which I refuse to believe, would he have left all this damning evidence strewn about so carelessly?~~

~~**BATTLE.** Well, sir, apparently he did. You can't get away from facts.~~