

SIR HENRY *enters left. He is followed on by*
INSPECTOR COLQUHOUN, *who is a thoughtful, quiet*
man with charm and a sense of humour. His personality is
sympathetic. He must not be played as a comedy part.
SIR HENRY *has a filled pipe in his hand.)*

SIR HENRY. *(moving to the fireplace)* Inspector Colquhoun
 would like to talk to Gerda, my dear. *(He turns.)* Could
 you take him up and ... *(He sees GERDA and breaks off)*

LADY ANGKATELL. This is Mrs. Cristow, Mr. Colquhoun.
(The INSPECTOR crosses to left of the sofa.)

GERDA. *(nervously)* Yes - yes - I - you want to talk to me?
 About John's death?

INSPECTOR. I don't want to distress you, Mrs. Cristow, but
 I would like to ask you a few questions. You're not
 bound to answer them unless you wish to do so, and
 you are entitled, if you like, to have your solicitor
 present before you say anything at all.

SIR HENRY. That is what I should advise, Gerda.

GERDA. *(putting her feet to the ground and sitting up)* A
 solicitor? But why a solicitor? A solicitor wouldn't know
 anything about John's death.

INSPECTOR. Any statement you choose to make ...

GERDA. I want to tell you. It's all so bewildering -like a bad
 dream. I haven't been able to cry, even. I just don't
 feel anything at all.

SIR HENRY. It's the shock.

GERDA. You see, it all happened so suddenly. I'd gone back to the house. I was just coming downstairs to fetch my leathercraft bag, and I heard a shot - came in here and there was John - lying all twisted up - and blood - blood ...

(MIDGE moves to the chair down right and sits.)

INSPECTOR. What time was this, Mrs. Cristow?

(LADY ANGKATELL and MIDGE exchange looks.)

GERDA. I don't know. It might have been twelve o'clock or half past.

INSPECTOR. Where had you been before you came downstairs?

GERDA. In my room.

INSPECTOR. Had you just got up?

GERDA. No. I'd been up for about three-quarters of an hour. I'd been outside. Sir Henry was very kindly teaching me how to shoot - but I did it so badly I couldn't hit the target at all.

(LADY ANGKATELL and MIDGE exchange looks.)

Then I walked round a little - for exercise - came back to the house for my leatherwork bag, went upstairs, came down and then - as I told you - I heard a shot and came in here - and there was John dead.

HENRIETTA. *(coming down the steps up centre) Dying. (She moves to the drinks table, puts down her cup, takes a cigarette from the box on the table and lights it from the one she is smoking.)*

(They all look at HENRIETTA.)

GERDA. I thought he was dead. There was the blood and the revolver. I picked it up ...

INSPECTOR. Why did you pick it up, Mrs. Cristow?

(There is a tense pause. All look at the INSPECTOR.)

GERDA. I don't know.

INSPECTOR. You shouldn't have touched it, you know.

GERDA. Shouldn't I?

(MIDGE takes a cigarette from the case in her bag.)

INSPECTOR. And then what happened?

GERDA. Then the others all came in and I said, "John's dead - somebody's killed John." But who could have killed him? Who could possibly have wanted to kill him?

(SIR HENRY strikes a match suddenly and lights his pipe. EDWARD looks at him for a moment.)

John was the best of men, so good, so kind. He did everything for everyone. He sacrificed himself. Why, his patients all adored him. It must have been some sort of accident, it must - it must.

MIDGE. Couldn't it have been suicide?

(MIDGE feels in her bag for her lighter.)

INSPECTOR. No. *(He crosses below the sofa to right of it.)* The shot was fired from at least four feet away.

GERDA. But it must have been an accident.

INSPECTOR. It wasn't an accident, Mrs Cristow. *(He takes his lighter from his pocket and lights MIDGE s cigarette.)* There was no disagreement between you?

GERDA. Between John and me? No.

(MIDGE rises and crosses above the sofa to the steps up centre)

INSPECTOR. Are you sure of that?

GERDA. He was a little annoyed with me when we drove down here. I change gear so badly. I - I don't know how it is, whenever I'm in the car with him, I never seem to do anything right. I get nervous.

INSPECTOR. There was no serious disagreement? No - quarrel?