

INSPECTOR. *(thoughtfully)* Lady Angkatell is so very vague.

SERGEANT. *(crossing to centre)* She's bats, if you ask me.

(The INSPECTOR holds out his hand and the SERGEANT gives him his notebook.)

INSPECTOR. I wonder. I wonder. *(He flicks over the pages of the notebook.)* Interesting discrepancies. Lady Angkatell says, *(he reads)* "He murmured something before he died, but she couldn't catch what it was."

SERGEANT. Perhaps she's deaf.

INSPECTOR. Oh no, I don't think she is. According to Sir Henry, John Cristow said "Henrietta" in a loud voice. When I put it to her - but not before - Miss Harvey says the same thing, Edward Angkatell says Cristow died without saying a word. Gudgeon does not precisely recollect. *(He moves below the sofa.)* They all

know something, Penny, but they're not telling us. *(He sits on the sofa at the right end of it.)*

SERGEANT. We'll get round to it. *(He crosses to the*

INSPECTOR.) Think the wife did shoot him? *(He takes his notebook from the INSPECTOR, then eases to right of the sofa.)*

INSPECTOR. Wives so often have excellent reasons for shooting their husbands that one tends to suspect them automatically.

SERGEANT. It's clear enough that all the others think she did it.

INSPECTOR. Or do they probably all *want* to think she did it?

SERGEANT. Meaning exactly?

INSPECTOR. There's an atmosphere of family solidarity in this house. They're all blood relations. Mrs. Cristow's the only outsider. Yes, I think they'd be glad to be sure she did it.

SERGEANT. *(crossing above the sofa to centre)* But you're not so sure?

INSPECTOR. Actually anyone could have shot him. There are no alibis in this case. *(He rises and stands right of the sofa.)* No times or places to check. Just look at the entrances and exits. You could shoot him from the terrace, pop round the house and - *(He indicates the window right.)* in by this window. Or through the front door and hall and in by that door, and if you say you've come from the farm or the kitchen garden or from shooting in the woods, nobody can check that statement. *(He looks through the window right.)* There are shrubs and undergrowth right up to the house. You could play hide-and-seek there for hours. *(He moves above the sofa.)* The revolver was one of those used for target practice. Anyone could have picked it up and they'd all handled it, though the only clear prints on it are those of Mrs. Cristow and Henrietta Angkatell. *(He moves left of the sofa.)* It all boils down really to what sort

of a man John Cristow was. *(He moves below the sofa.)* If you know all about a man, you can guess who would have wanted to murder him.

SERGEANT. We'll pick up all that in London, in Harley Street. Secretary, servants.

INSPECTOR. *(sitting on the sofa at the left end of it)* Any luck with the servants here?

SERGEANT. Not yet. They're the starchy kind. There's no kitchen maid unfortunately. I always had a success with kitchen maids. *(He moves above the armchair left centre to the fireplace.)* There's a daily girl as under-housemaid I've got hopes of. I'd like to put in a little more work on her now, sir, if you don't want me.