

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a flat cap and a light-colored shirt with dark suspenders, is shown in profile. He is holding a long, dark smoking pipe that is emitting a plume of white smoke. The background is dark and textured.

***ANNIE
HAYNES***

***WHO KILLED
CHARMIAN
KARSLAKE?***

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***WHO KILLED
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Annie Haynes

Who Killed Charmian Karlsruhe?

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Chapter I

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"Beastly mess the place seems to be in," grumbled Sir Arthur Penn-Moreton, looking round the room with a disgusted air.

"Well, if you will give balls you have to put up with the aftermath," said Dicky, his younger brother, screwing his monocle in his left eye as he spoke.

Dicky was already seated at the table devouring kidneys and bacon with apparent relish.

Sir Arthur glanced at him as he sat down opposite. "You don't look up to much this morning, Dicky!"

"How can a chap look up to much when he has sat up to the small hours of the night before, dancing round with a lot of screaming young women, and eating all sorts of indigestible food?" Dicky questioned, taking another helping of kidney. "You don't look any great shakes yourself for that matter. We are neither of us in our first youth, Arthur, you must remember. Years will tell, you know."

"Don't be a fool, Dicky!" Sir Arthur said sharply. "Your wife was a great success. She roused us all up."

Dicky looked pleased. "Good-looking kid, isn't she? And lively—she has got the goods, you bet."

"Who are you two gassing about?" a third man inquired, lounging into the room. "Charmian Karslake, I dare swear. She made your country bumpkins look up, Moreton, I thought. Even the parson said he found her extraordinarily interesting. And if she put it over him, by Jove, it is one up to her."

"Pooh! Old Bowles doesn't count," Sir Arthur said, brushing the very notion away with a wave of his hand. "And you don't remember much of Hepton, or I should say Meadshire society, Larpent, or you would realize that no actress, however wonderful, would excite the people overmuch. Mummers they call them, and look upon them as creatures of a different calibre to themselves."

"And so they are!" exclaimed Mr. Larpent, sitting down and pulling a dish of mushrooms towards him. "Charmian Karlake, if you mean her! She is all alive from the crown of her lovely head to the toes of her pretty little feet. Now, last night your Meadshire beauties were about as cheerful as so many cows or sheep. Different calibre to Charmian Karlake, by Jove, I should think they are!"

While Mr. Larpent delivered himself of this exordium the room was gradually filling with other members of the house-party at Hepton Abbey, all looking more or less jaded. The one exception was Dicky Penn-Moreton's young American wife. Mrs. Richard looked as bright as though dancing until three o'clock in the morning was an everyday experience with her, as indeed it was. Following her came Lady Penn-Moreton, the mistress of the house, as cheerful as ever, though rather tired-looking.

Hepton Abbey was something of a show place, one of the wealthiest religious houses in the kingdom at the time of the Dissolution, and it and the fat revenues appertaining to it had been bestowed by King Henry upon his reigning favourite, the head of the Penn-Moreton family. Probably Penn-Moreton had saved his head and his fortune by retiring immediately to his new estate and devoting himself to its improvement and development, and though he entertained King Henry regally at Hepton he was little seen at Court for the rest of his life. And since that time down to the present

day, though the younger sons of the Penn-Morettons had gone into the Army or the Navy, or sometimes, though more rarely, into the Church, the heads of the family had always occupied themselves in the development of their lands.

The Abbey itself had been restored as little as possible, tradition said that the rooms in the bachelors' wing had been the old monks' cells. But in the other parts of the house two or three had been put together, and beyond the small diamond-paned windows showed little trace of their origin. The hall and the big diningroom had been made out of the old chapel. Visitors to the Abbey could see the remains of the high altar opposite the door by which they were admitted. Only bathrooms and the big conservatory—which from the outside looked like unsightly excrescences—had been added since the Penn-Morettons' ownership.

The present head of the family was Sir Arthur Penn-Moretton, who had married, a couple of years before, the pretty, lively daughter of a penniless Irish peer. Their little son was now a year old. The previous Sir Arthur Penn-Moretton had been married twice, and had one son by each marriage. The present Sir Arthurs mother had died soon after her son's birth, and the widower had replaced her within the year, so that there was no great difference in age between the two boys.

Dicky Penn-Moretton was a general favourite in society, but his portion as a younger son had been small, and Dicky was not fond of work. Just eighteen, he had joined the Army in the first months of the Great War, and he and his brother had passed through it unscathed. After the Armistice he had spent some time with the Army of Occupation; later he had announced that he loathed soldiering in peace time, that he found it impossible to live on his pay, supplemented, as it was, by his own small income and his brother's liberal

allowance, and had resigned his commission. Since then he had been unable to find a job to his liking, and had remained at Hepton looking round the estate and, as he put it, learning his business from the agent. A couple of months before he had astonished society by marrying the vivacious daughter of Silas P. Juggs, the Chicago multi-millionaire.

Sir Arthur and Lady Penn-Moreton had given a ball the night before this story opens to welcome the young couple on their return to England after their honeymoon.

The marriage had been so hurriedly arranged that there had been literally no time to get a house, and the Richard Penn-Morettons were at present living in one of London's palatial hotels, seeing life and, incidentally, making long motor journeys to look at desirable residences to let.

Mrs. Richard had made a great impression at the ball. Her wonderful Parisian frock, the vivacity for which her countrywomen are famous, and a certain *joie de vivre*, peculiarly her own, had fascinated the somewhat humdrum society near Hepton.

Another attraction from over the water had been present in the person of the great American actress, who had taken all London by storm—Charmian Karslake.

Lady Moreton had regarded the acceptance of her invitation as a compliment, as the ball at Hepton Abbey was the only festivity at which the actress had been present since her coming to England. .

Her loveliness was undeniable; tall and slim, with an exquisite complexion that owed nothing to art, with a mass of auburn hair that alone would have made her remarkable in these days of shingling. Her small *mignon* face, with its beautifully formed features, was lighted up by a pair of eyes so deeply blue that they seemed almost to match the big sapphire ball that she always wore suspended by a long

platinum chain. Her mascot, Miss Karslake called it, and it was always so described in every interview or account of her that appeared in any paper. At the ball she had worn a wonderful gown woven of gold tissue. Like a flame she had flashed to and fro among the sober Meadshire folk.

Dicky Moreton's eyes kept wandering to the door, in spite of his pretty wife's presence. So did those of most of the men in the room. But the minutes passed and no Charmian Karslake appeared.

Sir Arthur began to talk about the shooting; the fresh comers finished their breakfast and retired with the morning papers to the window.

At last the butler came into the room. He looked uncomfortably at Sir Arthur.

"Could I speak to you for a minute, if you please, Sir Arthur?"

With a murmured word of apology Sir Arthur went out of the room.

"Old Brook looks as if he had had a spot of something last night," commented Dicky. "Whitish about the gills, reddish about the eyes, don't you know!"

"Dicky, I'm really ashamed of you," Mrs. Richard flashed round upon him. "Brook is the cutest creature alive. He might have stepped from the pages of Dickens or Thackeray, or Anthony Trollope. Family retainer, you know. And you—"

Words apparently failed Mrs. Richard. She made an expressive face at her husband just as Sir Arthur re-entered, looking distinctly worried.

He turned to his brother. "One of the upper doors has stuck, Dicky. You and Larpent will have to give me a hand. This old wood is the very deuce to move when once it catches."

"All serene. I'll come along," said Dicky, abandoning his kidneys and beckoning to Mr. Larpent, who resigned his mushrooms with a sigh.

Once outside the room Sir Arthur's manner changed. "I'm afraid that there is something wrong, Miss Karslake's maid has not been able to get in this morning. At first she thought, when there was no response to her knock, that Miss Karslake was just sleeping off the effects of last night's late hours. But at last she grew alarmed and appealed to Brook. He came to me, as you saw, and we have both been up. But though we have made noise enough to wake the dead we can't rouse her. I can't think what is the matter."

Dicky gave his brother a resounding slap on the back. "Cheerio, I expect she is all right. You can't expect her to keep the same hours as the rest of the world." But Dicky's own face was white as he followed his brother up the stairs and along the corridor to the door outside which a maid was standing—a typical-looking Frenchwoman with her dark hair and eyes, her black frock and coquettish little apron. She was dabbing her eyes with a dainty handkerchief as the men came up to her.

"Ah, sare," she exclaimed, taking a look at them out of the corners of her eyes, "my poor Mademoiselle, dat somesing 'orrible 'as 'appened to her."

"Rot! My good girl, I expect either that your mistress had gone out for an early walk or else she has taken something to make her sleep, and cannot hear us." Dicky turned to his brother. "Best keep all the women back, old chap, in case—But we will soon have this door in. Now what sort of stuff would your mistress take if she could not sleep?" he demanded of the maid.

She spread out her hands. "Me! I do not know. Nevare—nevare have I seen my Mademoiselle take anysing. Nevare I

see anysing zat she can take."

"H'm! Well, she may keep it out of sight. Stand out of the way, please, mademoiselle. Now, Larpent!" At a word from Sir Arthur, Brook had gone back to keep Lady Moreton and the other women back.

Now the men surveyed the door a minute, then Dicky, his brother and Mr. Larpent put their shoulders to it. It cracked at first, but it did not give and it took the best efforts of all of them, using a flat board one of the footmen brought as a lever, before they were able to force it open. Then Dicky Moreton drew back, his fair face white.

"I am afraid there is something very wrong, Arthur. The room is all upset, as far as I can see."

"And I don't know how you did see," said John Larpent. "I was just beside you and I didn't. Don't be a fool, Dicky! The room is in a deuce of a mess, that's all. The girl's on the bed." But his voice stopped and he drew back with an exclamation of horror.

The most cursory glance was enough to show that something was terribly wrong. The room was in confusion, the furniture was tossed about everywhere, and Charmian Karlake lay on the bed, looking almost as if she had been flung there. Her white face was turned towards the door, the mouth wide open, and the blue, starry eyes, dull now and glazed, stared sightlessly at the men in the doorway. Quite evidently she had not finished undressing, though she was lying across the bed.

The bed-clothes were trailing on the floor, and she was wearing soft silk underclothing of the same fabric and colour as the wonderful gold frock she had worn at the ball the night before. Over them she had apparently thrown carelessly a white silk kimona. Right in the front, over the left breast, an ugly red stain disfigured both the kimona and

the gold tissue. It needed no second glance to see that life had been extinct for some hours.

Sir Arthur went nearer and bent over the quiet form. He took one of the cold hands in his and let it fall again.

"Dead!" he said in a hoarse whisper. "Dead, and cold! Poor soul! Poor soul! What could have made her do it?"

"Made her do it!" echoed one of the men who had followed him in. "Man alive! Don't you see"—pointing to two tiny burnt holes in the midst of the red stain, and then waving his hands round the disordered room—"how she has struggled and fought for her life? Charmian Karlake has been foully, brutally murdered."

Chapter II

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The Golden Theatre was often said to be appropriately so named, for not only were its furniture plenishings golden, but it was the property of a syndicate, every member of which was popularly reputed to be a millionaire. The salaries given to the actors and actresses were enormous, and the box-office takings were in accordance. Night after night, when other theatres were not half-filled, the legend "House Full" hung outside the Golden.

Of late the great attraction there had been the famous American actress, Charmian Karslake, renowned no less for her brilliant, exquisite beauty than for her musical voice—the "golden voice" her admirers called it. A brief season had been arranged for her in town, and there were rumours that her salary was a fabulous sum per week. It had been publicly stated beforehand that Miss Karslake disliked society, and that all her time was spent in study.

There was general surprise therefore when it became known that Miss Karslake would not be in the cast for a couple of nights, and that she had accepted an invitation to be present at the Penn-Morettons, ball at Hepton Abbey.

"Why the Penn-Morettons?" people asked one another. Invitations had been showered upon Charmian Karslake from people far higher, far more important in the social world than the Penn-Morettons, only to be refused.

But neither Miss Karslake nor the Moretons were communicative, and public curiosity went unsatisfied.

Today, however, there was no cheerful "House Full" placard hung out at the Golden Theatre. Instead, all inside

was darkness and gloom. In front of the box-office there were posters with black borders, men were propping up similar ones outside the theatre—all bore the same inscription:

"Owing to the sudden death of Miss Charmian Karslake this theatre is closed until further notice. Money for tickets already booked will be refunded, and should be applied for at the box-office."

"The sudden death of Miss Charmian Karslake." People stared, rubbed their eyes and stared again.

It was only this morning that those of them who took in the "Morning Crier," or who looked at society paragraphs in the other papers, had read of her being present at the ball at Hepton Abbey, had revelled in the description of her gown of gold tissue, her wonderful jewel, the great sapphire ball—her mascot. And now it was impossible that she, brilliant, vivid Charmian Karslake should be dead!

People gathered in groups, the groups coalesced, became one great crowd that blocked the pavement in front of the Golden Theatre, and collected again as soon as it was disposed of by the police.

At last a slim, slight man, quite easily recognizable by the force as a detective in plain clothes, unobtrusively passed through the crowd.

Nearly opposite the Golden Theatre he knocked up against a man coming from the opposite direction, and stopped in surprise.

"Harbord! I was going to wire you. I thought you were in Derbyshire."

"So I was this morning," Harbord answered, "but matters have petered out there and I was anxious to report as soon as I could."

"Good for you!" Inspector Stoddart said approvingly. "Now have you any arrangement to make? I leave St. Pancras by the 5.15."

Harbord shook his head. "My people do not expect me back to-day as a matter of fact. So I am an absolutely free lance."

"So much the better," Stoddart said heartily, pushing his way out of the crowd.

He hailed a passing taxi, telling the man to drive to New Scotland Yard and directed Harbord to get in with him. Then, when they had settled themselves, he looked at the young man.

"You saw that crowd before the Golden Theatre. Do you know what has brought them together?"

Harbord shook his head. "Something about Charmian Karlake, I suppose. She seems to have put it over the man in the street. There is always some new excitement."

"Yes," the inspector said grimly. "This time it is her death; that's all!"

"Her death!" Harbord stared at him. "Why, just now in the train I heard two women talking of some grand ball Charmian Karlake was at last night, and the wonderful gown she was wearing. And some sapphire mascot!"

"Quite!" The inspector nodded. "She danced through the evening and exhibited her gold gown and her mascot and then—she went up to her room to meet her death."

"But how?" Harbord asked.

"She was shot through the heart; at close quarters too," the inspector told him.

Hardened though he was to the ways of criminals, Harbord turned distinctly paler. "By whom?"

"Ah! That," the inspector said gloomily, "is what you and I are going to catch the next train to Hepton in Meadshire to

find out."

Harbord gave a slight start. "You mean—?"

"The local police have appealed to Scotland Yard and I have been placed in charge of the case, and, as, I told you, I am off at once. You will come with me. I would rather have you than any three other members of the C.I.D. Now we have just half an hour before we start. I can tell you the main facts of the case. I dare say the evening papers will enlighten us further as we go down."

"Who on earth should want to hurt Charmian Karlake?" Harbord debated. "I have always understood that she had made no friends in London, and kept herself very much to herself. I wonder—is there any reason to suppose she had been followed from America?"

"I know nothing about that," Inspector Stoddart answered. "The first thing we have to do is to ascertain the names of every man, woman and child who slept in Hepton Abbey last night, and then to see if we can discover any connexion between any of them and Charmian Karlake."

"Sounds rather a tall order," Harbord observed. "The ball was an extraordinarily large one, I understand."

"The ball was, but the house-party was not," Inspector Stoddart corrected. "Most of the guests came by car. All the neighbouring houses had parties for the occasion; so that, although the house was full, it was not abnormally so."

"I suppose there is no doubt that the murder was committed by some one in the house," Harbord hazarded.

The inspector raised his eyebrows. "No reasonable doubt one would think. There is no sign of the house being broken into, and, yet, there is just this chance which we must not overlook. I hear that the servants testify that all the doors and windows on the ground floor were fastened after the dance and were found in the same state on the morning

after the murder. But to my mind that does not rule out one possibility. A stranger to the Penn-Moretons who had some enmity towards Miss Karslake, or who intended to steal her jewels, might have managed to secrete himself in the house while the ball was going on. Then, finding Miss Karslake was awake—for there is ample evidence to prove that she was killed soon after going to her room—and, very probably, attempted to rouse the household, he may have shot her in the scuffle which certainly took place, and managed to get out of the window. On the other hand, Charmian Karslake may have been in somebody's way and may have been murdered to get rid of her. But why on earth—?"

"In whose way?" Harbord questioned.

"How can I tell?" the inspector continued. "There is a snag or two in any theory that I can evolve as yet. However, we shall know more about it in an hour or two."

Hepton Abbey was a little more than an hour's run from town. As the inspector had prophesied, the first edition of the evening papers was procurable at St. Pancras.

"The murder of Charmian Karslake" in big, black type occupied the front page of most of them. But of details, evidently little was known, nothing was there that the inspector had not already heard, the papers had to content themselves with reprinting the little that had reached them of Charmian Karslake's career in the States, and giving long accounts of the play in which she had been taking part in London.

It was already dark when they reached the station for Hepton. Here Sir Arthur Moreton's car met them, and a run of a very few minutes brought them to the Abbey. They were taken at once to Sir Arthur's study.

He greeted Stoddart with outstretched hand. "This is very good of you, Stoddart. I remembered your work in the

Craston Diamond Case last year—Lord Craston was a friend of mine, you know—and then there was the Barstow murder. You tracked Skrine down when there did not seem to be the ghost of a clue pointing to him, and I made up my mind to ask specially that you might be sent to us. This affair has got to be probed to the very bottom. That a woman should be murdered in my house and the assassin go unpunished is unthinkable."

The inspector permitted himself a slight smile.

"It has not happened yet, Sir Arthur. And it is early days to think of failure in connexion with Miss Karlake's death. Now, you are anxious that we should set to work as soon as we can, I know. I gather that the local superintendent has set a guard over the house and its inmates, so that no one who was known to have slept in the house last night has been allowed to leave."

Sir Arthur nodded. "That was done at once. But I cannot believe—"

Stoddart held up his hand. "Belief does not enter into these cases, Sir Arthur. Now, I must ask you to give me particulars of as many of these said inmates as you can. First, your immediate circle."

Sir Arthur drew his brows together. It was obvious that the task was not to his taste.

"Our immediate circle," he repeated. "Well, first, there is, of course, the young couple for whom last night's ball was given—my younger brother and his American bride."

"American?" The inspector, who had taken out his notebook, held his pencil poised for a moment. "The States, I suppose?"

"California," Sir Arthur assented. "But I do not imagine my young sister-in-law has spent much time in her native country. She was educated at a convent near Paris; when

she left there she went for a long Continental tour with her father, Silas Juggs—the canned soup magnate, you know. Then she probably went home for a time, I am not sure. Later, she had one season in London when my brother fell a victim to her charms; result a violent love-affair, a short engagement, and a speedy marriage. No, as I see my sister-in-law's life there is no point in which it could have touched that of Charmian Karslake. Besides, she would have told us if she had known anything of Miss Karslake."

"Ah, of course," the inspector murmured, as he made an entry in his notebook. "Now, Sir Arthur, the other members of the house-party—I have heard a Mr. Larpent's name."

"Yes, Mr. John Larpent, a distant connexion, and my friend from boyhood," Sir Arthur assented. "We were at Eton and at Christ Church together. But of course you have heard of him before, inspector. He is doing extraordinarily well at the Bar."

The inspector brought his hands together sharply. "Of course; I knew the name was familiar. It was he who defended Mrs. Gatwick last year."

Sir Arthur nodded. "He did not get her off, but it was a narrow shave. Quite possibly he may be able to help you, inspector. I fancy he has been making a few inquiries on his own."

The inspector did not look particularly gratified. "Well, we shall see. Mr. Larpent is unmarried, I believe?"

"At present." Sir Arthur smiled faintly. "He has lately become engaged to a friend of Lady Moreton's—Miss Galbraith."

The inspector looked up. "Daughter of Lord Galbraith?"

"The last—not the present peer," Sir Arthur corrected.

"She would be here," Stoddart said, as if stating a fact.

"She was, naturally," Sir Arthur assented.

The inspector glanced over his notes. "Anybody else? I mean guests. I shall have to get the servants' names from the housekeeper, I presume?"

"I expect so," Sir Arthur said slowly. "As for the other guests, there were in the bachelors' wing Captain Arthur Appley, Lord John Barton, Mr. Williams. But I made a list—here it is," drawing a piece of paper from his pocket. "I thought it might save time. There, do you see, all the bachelors on this side. The unmarried ladies in the opposite wing."

The inspector took the list and studied it in silence for a minute. Then he said without looking up:

"Miss Karlake did not sleep on this side of the house with the other unmarried ladies, I gather?"

"No—" Sir Arthur hesitated. "As a matter of fact," he went on, "Lady Moreton was rather pleased—flattered perhaps I should say—at getting Miss Karlake to attend the ball, as she is reported to have refused all such invitations since coming to England, and Lady Moreton made every effort to do her honour and put her in one of the big rooms in front of the house."

"I see!" The inspector tapped his fingers reflectively on his notebook for a minute; then he glanced up sharply. "Why did Miss Karlake accept Lady Moreton's invitation, Sir Arthur, when, as you say, she had refused all others since coming to England?"

Sir Arthur shrugged his shoulders. "Ask me another. Why does any woman ever do anything? They made one another's acquaintance somehow, I really don't know how, and apparently took a fancy to one another. Miss Karlake was enormously interested in antiquities of all kinds, and the Abbey is distinctly unique, you know. Lady Moreton talked about it, and when the idea of this ball was mooted

she asked Miss Karslake to come down for it and take the opportunity of seeing the Abbey. She was gratified, and I may say almost surprised at Miss Karslake's acceptance."

"Was she interested in the Abbey when she arrived?"

"Oh, yes. I think so—" Sir Arthur hesitated again. "As a matter of fact she had not much opportunity of expressing her interest in anything. The house was—well, in the state a house generally is when a big entertainment is about to take place in it. I promised to show her over it next morning, when it was, alas, too late!"

The inspector's penetrating glance was still fixed upon Sir Arthur.

"You have no clue to this apparently inexplicable mystery?"

Sir Arthur shook his head. "Not the faintest. Miss Karslake was an absolute stranger to me and, as far as I know, to every one in the house. I can only suggest that the motive may have been robbery, since the great sapphire ball she always wore, and which is generally spoken of as her mascot, is missing."

"Any other jewels?"

"Her maid seems to think not. She wore a quaint old necklace of pearls at the dance and apparently threw it, and a magnificent marquise ring she generally wore, on her dressing-table. All are quite safe."

"With regard to the blue ball," the inspector questioned again, "it is, of course, of great value."

Sir Arthur looked doubtful. "I really don't know. I am no judge of such things, but I should imagine a great part of its value came from its historic association, and that of course would not exist from a burglar's point of view. At the same time it has brought bad luck to most of its possessors as far as I can ascertain. When first one hears of it, it was the

property of the ill-fated Paul of Russia. Later it passed to the hapless Princess de Lamballe and the murdered Queen Draga of Serbia, to name just a few of the unfortunate possessors. How it came into the possession of Miss Karlake I have no idea. But I have heard that, though she had been warned that misfortune always followed in its train, Charmian Karlake laughed at the very notion and said that it was going to be her mascot, and would bring her nothing but good. Since her coming to England, the fact that she invariably wore it has often been commented upon in the papers and may have attracted the cupidity of some of the criminal classes."

"Quite!" The inspector stroked his chin. "Of course it would be obvious that the chance of getting hold of it would be far better here than in town, but there must have been more valuable jewels worn here than that ball."

Sir Arthur smiled. "Decidedly there were. To go no further, Lady Moreton's pearls must have been worth ten times the amount, to say nothing of Mrs. Richard's diamonds. But these were put into the safe. I offered to take care of the sapphire, but Miss Karlake laughingly told me she wore it day and night."

The inspector nodded. "Any money missing, Sir Arthur? Any valuables from anyone else in the house?"

"Nothing at all, as far as we can ascertain."

The inspector rose. "I'm very much obliged to you, Sir Arthur. Now, if you please, we will have a look at the scene of the crime and then I shall be glad to have a few minutes' conversation with the different members of the house-party."

"The—the body has been moved, inspector, to the private chapel on the north side of the house. It was

removed after Superintendent Bower had made his examination."

The inspector's lips tightened. "H'm! that's a pity. Still, possibly it was unavoidable under the circumstances. I should like to have a word with your butler, Sir Arthur."

"Brook? Oh, certainly. He shall take you up to the room." Sir Arthur opened the door as he spoke. "Ah, there you are, Brook. Take these gentlemen up to Miss Karslake's room."

"Yes, Sir Arthur."

The butler was a man of middle age. Ordinarily no doubt as impassive as most of his kind, today he was shaken out of his usual calm. His face had a mottled, unhealthy appearance. As he turned to precede them Stoddart saw that his eyes looked frightened, that his hands were shaking. He led the way upstairs and down a passage immediately opposite. At the first door they came to a policeman was stationed, and as he moved aside at a word from Stoddart they saw that the door had been broken open.

The inspector stepped softly over to the bed. Harbord followed. He looked at it for a moment, then he glanced at the inspector.

"She was not killed here, sir. Not on this bed, I mean."

"No, the assassin must have moved her." Stoddart pointed to a rug before the fire-place. "She was standing over there, I think."

Harbord turned his attention to the place indicated. The rug had evidently been kicked aside. On the polished floor beyond there were evident traces of bloodstains.

The inspector took a tiny pill-box from his pocket and shook it over the blood. After a minute or two he picked it up and signalled to Harbord, who was leaning over the window-sill, microscope in hand.

He looked round. "No one got out of this window!"

"No," said the inspector slowly. "No, I'm afraid they did not."