

The Depressed Lady

By : [declan mckimm](#)

"I was intrigued the whole way through" "This is a first-rate murder mystery" "This is bloody brilliant!" In my fourth (and personal favourite) whodunit, two students crash their car and are forced to stay in the mansion of an extremely wealthy woman. Then, the woman is murdered, and it is up to the students to figure out who the murderer is before they strike again. However, it is not as simple as that as they uncover some terrible secrets... If you are interested in murder, and you love a mind-boggling puzzle, this novel is the mystery for you!



Published on
Booksie

booksie.com/declan_mckimm

Copyright © declan mckimm, 2013
Publish your writing on Booksie.com.

The Depressed Lady

Table of Contents

Prologue

The Depressed Lady Chapter 2

The Depressed Lady Chapter 3

The Depressed Lady Chapter 4

The Depressed Lady Chapter 5

The Depressed Lady Chapter 6

The Depressed Lady Chapter 7

The Depressed Lady Chapter 8

The Depressed Lady Chapter 9

The Depressed Lady Chapter 10

The Depressed Lady Chapter 11

The Depressed Lady Chapter 12

The Murderer Revealed

Chapter 1: Prologue

Note: This story is entirely fictional and does not depict any actual person or event.

Prologue

"You can do it, Violet!" cried Robert, holding his wife's hand, absolutely terrified of the unknown.

"How long is this going to take?!" yelled Violet, screaming in agony.

"Just think, Violet, when this is over, you will have yourself a son!" cried Robert, clenching on to his wife's hand with all of his might.

"It might not be a son", replied Violet, who wanted her husband to stop getting his hopes up on something that only had half chance. Although she was a fairly religious woman, Violet did not believe that she was a blessed woman, so she would not feel shocked in the slightest if the child came out a girl.

"Of course it is. I believed all along that it is a boy", said Robert, who constantly reminded himself throughout the pregnancy that he was finally about to bear a son.

"I just want to get it out!" screamed Violet, who was now completely sick of Robert's assumption.

"Just imagine, when he grows up, he will have a beautiful life in a beautiful house. He will grow up well", said Robert, stroking the hand of his beloved wife.

"What if it's not a boy?" said Violet, continuing to listen to Robert.

"I highly doubt that, but if it is a girl, we shall try for another", said Robert, reassuring himself that it would not be the end of the world in the unlikely case that his first child was a daughter. He was madly religious, and he devoted most of his life to God. He never sinned, but there was something about him that very few people liked.

"Do you know how many years it has taken us to get this child?" said Violet, explaining to Robert that this was probably going to be their only child.

"I know, but we have prayed for a boy, and a boy we shall get. Remember - good things come to those who wait, and the waiting is almost over!"

"I'm praying for Lucille to be here!" cried Violet.

"She'll be here soon. Miss Hayworth has gone to find her", replied Robert, anxiously waiting the baby's arrival.

"She'll be ages. Mr. Broke, how long has she been? I think the baby's on its way!" cried Violet, who was lay in her bed in agony.

"It won't be long, ma'am", replied Mr. Broke.

"I cannot believe this is the night!" yelled Violet, with tears in her eyes, "in one moment, we will have a son!"

"That's more like it!" replied Robert.

The Depressed Lady

"Any minute now. Miss Bowes, can you fetch me some towels?" said Violet, who had suddenly felt like she had a son on the way. She thought she knew in her head that the baby inside her was a boy all along.

"They're right here, ma'am", replied Miss Bowes, handing her mistress the towels.

"When's Lucille going to be here?"

"She won't be long", said Robert, trying to keep Violet as calm as possible.

"How do you know that? Right from the start of my pregnancy, I wanted her here for the birth of my child", said Violet, who was beginning to become very moody.

"I cannot wait to watch him grow up", said Robert, with a giant smile on his face.

"Please, just be quiet. I need to be calm for this", replied Violet.

"I think Lucille is here now!"

"Thank God!"

Lucille arrived with Miss Hayworth, with tears in her eyes.

"Thank God I made it in time", said Lucille, "is it almost here?"

"Yes, he is", replied Robert.

"How do you know it is a boy?"

"We prayed for a boy".

Lucille looked at Violet, with doubt in her eyes.

"What if it is not a boy?" said Lucille.

"Then I will not have a son, and I would not like my inheritance passed on to a daughter! No, it is simply not a girl. It is a boy!"

"Whether you prayed or not, I think it would be a boy if it was a boy from the start of the pregnancy", said Lucille, who had debated several times with Robert about this subject.

"Don't talk that way, God can change the sex of an unborn child he he wants to. When is my son going to arrive?" cried an increasingly desperate Robert.

"Any minute now", replied Violet. She then started to scream and scream and scream. The baby was almost there.

"My son, my son!" yelled Robert.

"I can see his head!" cried Miss Bowes.

The baby was then born. Everyone in the room cried, as they saw the sex of the baby.

"It's a boy!" cried Robert.

"No, it's not", said Lucille, "it's a girl".

Chapter 2

Chapter 1

The year was 1960. I was a young woman, on a trip with my best friend, Victoria, and we were out in the middle of nowhere. For hours, Victoria drove through the countryside and it was rather depressing, staring at the similar trees and moss that covered the ground. There was nothing to look forward to. Both Victoria and I had come to England to see the beautiful sights, but we suddenly got bored of them. Unfortunately, we found ourselves getting lost, and I found myself becoming increasingly frustrated, both with Victoria and myself for getting ourselves in this mess.

"So, why did you want to come to England in the first place?" I asked Victoria, wanting to understand her motives.

"Well, Angela back at home told me that England was good for sightseeing. She was obviously wrong", replied Victoria, still remaining completely focussed on the road.

"When do you think we will get out of here?" I asked impatiently, knowing that that question would not bring us any closer to finding the solution to this dreadful problem.

"I don't know", Victoria predictably replied.

"It's not useful when you cannot remember the name of the place you were going to. We would have been able to go and ask for help. How could you forget a thing like that?" I asked Victoria. I could not believe that she forgot the name of the place we were going to. If she had at least told me, I would have remembered and we would not have got lost.

"I have no idea. I'm still trying to remember, but it won't come back to me", replied Victoria, who seemed to be purposely winding me up.

"You could have told me, then we wouldn't be in this mess!" I replied, raising my voice slightly.

"I'm sorry, the stress of this trip was too much for me. We are in a foreign country, we have absolutely no idea where we are, and we have no idea where we are going! I'm so useless at planning trips!"

"I wish we could telephone Angela at home. She would know what to do", I said sarcastically.

"I don't even know why I took her advice. I don't even like her!" replied Victoria, clearly showing that she had regretted coming on the trip.

"Remember the time you and Angela accidentally wandered into the men's rooms?" I said, trying to take both mine and my friend's minds off the situation that we were in.

"How can I forget? Anyway, that was a long time ago, when we and Angela were best friends. I try to avoid her these days, but unfortunately, she seems to be everywhere I go".

"Perhaps she's jealous that you've found a new best friend", I laughed.

"Probably. Anyway, we need to think about how we are going to return the car", said a conscientious Victoria.

"We were supposed to be here for another three days, remember?"

The Depressed Lady

"Well, I don't know what's gonna happen now, so we'd better just hope for the best. I wish we never come on this trip now!"

Victoria saw a sign on the road, and she suddenly turned in that direction.

"Why did you turn in that direction in all of a sudden?" I asked her.

"I just have a feeling it might bring us luck", replied my best friend, who was fairly superstitious.

"If you say so".

"I still can't get over this!"

"Neither can I, but you can't blame yourself, you know".

"Of course I'm gonna blame myself, how can I not?"

I struggled to answer to that honestly, as I knew that deep down, this mess was entirely down to her.

"See", Victoria said, "I can't do anything right!"

"It was just a mistake, not telling me where we were going. Why can't we ask for someone to give us directions to the Great Mining Memorial Museum?"

"It's probably miles away, now".

"We could ask if anyone knows what it is".

"It doesn't seem to be common knowledge around here, so it would be pointless".

"What if we are close to it?"

"Alright, we'll drive around for a little while longer, and if we do not get any further forward, we will go and ask for help. If only I could remember the name of the town it was in! God, this is stressing me out!"

Since she was American, Victoria was used to driving on the right, so as our luck was already on short supply, we were hit even worse when Victoria somehow managed to lose focus of the road and crash into a tree. We got out alive, and suffered only cuts and minor bruises, but the car was definitely never going to be on the roads again. We could not believe ourselves when the car had crashed. I was extremely frightened, since we had just crashed in the middle of nowhere.

Both Victoria and I stepped out of the destroyed car. Her brown, curly hair was sticking up in many places around her head, and mine was covering my face. Victoria's short leg had a small cut on it, and my arms had three small contrusions on them, but other than that, we were not harmed at all, so we considered ourselves very lucky.

"What are we going to do now?!" I screamed to Victoria.

"I don't know", my friend replied, "we're gonna have to find some help".

"So were gonna hitch hike?"

"Have you got a better suggestion?" said Victoria, who was extremely annoyed with herself at the fact that she

The Depressed Lady

had caused a crash, almost seriously injuring us both.

I had to go along with Victoria, since there was absolutely nothing we could do. Fortunately for us, Victoria spotted a building in the distance. It looked quite far away, but it was the only one we had seen for at least twenty miles. To see if she could see it better, Victoria climbed the tree that she had just crashed into, and looked into the distance.

"Looks like we're gonna have to go there", said Victoria.

"What are we gonna say?" I asked her.

"Just ask them if they have a telephone, and if they do, we could pay them a little bit of money to use it".

It sounded like a good plan, so I went along with her, and we started our walk along the road towards the house. While we were walking, all I could think about was how we were going to get the money to pay for the damages to the car. It was an extremely stressful time for me. Victoria, on the other hand, seemed rather enthusiastic about it all, and I did not know why.

"How are we gonna pay for that car?" I asked her.

"We'll have to dig into our savings account", she replied.

That was also another disaster for me. How was it fair that I should have to put some money towards it when she crashed the car? I had nothing to do with it!

"I'll help you pay a little bit", I said, "but it was your fault! You crashed the car!"

"I know, but it was an accident! It's not fair - both of us rented that car, and therefore, both of us should pay an equal amount!"

"You were not concentrating on the road!" I cried, trying to argue my way out of it.

"Yes I was! Anyway, you were doing all the talking. Why should I get the blame for the crash? Anyway, I don't wanna get into an argument with you. We'll be at the house in a moment".

I was sick of Victoria! I was still in shock five minutes later when we were almost at the building. When we got close up to it, we could easily see what it was, and the sight made us quite astonished. It was an incredibly large mansion. It looked very old fashioned, but it still looked beautiful. The garden was huge, and it looked like it belonged to the richest people in England! We were amazed! I could not believe it when we approached the gate. To our utter misfortune, the gate was locked, and there did not seem to be anybody around.

"What are we going to do now?" I asked Victoria.

"We'll wait here until somebody gets here", she replied rapidly.

"What if nobody comes?"

"They'll have to come out some time".

We waited outside the house for ages, and we talked and argued about what we were going to do about the car, until eventually, about an hour later, a man who was doing the gardening appeared, and he noticed Victoria and I looking at him.

The Depressed Lady

He just stood there, not mentioning anything. He looked rather shocked at what he saw - the house must not have had many visitors often.

"Yes?" he said, "who are you?"

Obviously, Victoria was the first to speak, because of her decisively outgoing personality.

"We're very sorry to bother you, but our car has crashed down the road, and we are wondering if we could come in to use a telephone. We have money, so we can pay to use the telephone".

The gardener replied, "well, it's not my decision to let you in. If you wait for a little while, I can see if you can come in".

"Thank God!" I said as the gardener walked inside.

"What would you do if he never came back?" Victoria asked me.

"Of course he'll come back. Why wouldn't he?"

"But what would you do if he didn't?"

"I would scream!"

"So would I!" I added, trying not to get paranoid about something that was not going to happen.

The gardener did return, and this time, he brought back a maid with him.

"I've been to see the lady of the house, and she said it would be fine if you would like to come in and use the telephone", the maid said to us.

"Thank you!" cried Victoria, entering the property.

"I'll show you in", said the maid, "and by the way, my name is Miss Douthwaite".

"My name is Victoria, and this is Janet", Victoria said.

"You sound American?" asked Miss Douthwaite.

"We are", replied Victoria.

"Well, I can see that. The point is, you won't know where you're going, will you?"

"We got lost", said Victoria.

"Well, you can explain it to Lady Violet", said Miss Douthwaite, "she's the one who owns this place".

"What's she like?" I asked her.

"She's fine. She's not nice, but not nasty, just fine", replied Miss Douthwaite.

When she said that, I turned round and noticed the gardener staring at us as though he had just disagreed with what the maid had just said. We then entered the house, completely unaware of the events that were about to take place.

Chapter 3

Chapter 2

When we first walked into the house, it was like walking into a fantasy land. The house was utterly beautiful, and we could not believe our eyes when we saw it. The front porch was the first room that we entered. It was full of lively paintings, up the stairs, paintings of various different people. As I looked around the bright room, I saw that there was very little else but many paintings. These pictures were obviously very important to the owner of the house.

"This is incredible!" said Victoria.

"Try spending seventeen years here", replied Miss Douthwaite, who did not smile in the slightest.

Victoria was wandering round the front porch, looking at all of the paintings. She noticed a painting of a man and a small child, and she stood there, staring at it. She seemed so amazed at that particular picture that she froze there.

"What's so special about that painting?" I asked her.

"What? Oh, nothing", replied Victoria, "I just like how they were painted with such perfection". Victoria has always been a keen art admirer.

"That's the Lord of the house. His name was Robert", said Miss Douthwaite.

"And is this his daughter?" asked Victoria.

"Yes".

"Are they here today?"

"Oh, no. Sadly, the Lord died just before I came here to work for the Lady. He died not long after that portrait was painted. The child is also dead".

"What a shame! That's awful! How did she die?" I asked, not expecting the reply that Miss Douthwaite had just given me.

"I have no idea. She also died just before I came here".

"So both of them died within a short period of time of each other?" I asked with great interest.

"Yes. I know, it's very sad, isn't it?" replied Miss Douthwaite.

"It must have been awful on the lady".

"Yes, and also, Lady Violet's sister, Lucille, had also died before her husband and daughter. All that's left of the family is Violet and her cousin, Mary".

Although it was very sad, I was also intrigued by the fact that three people had died within months of each other. I thought it was rather strange. I was about to ask what had happened to them, but I was interrupted by Lady Violet entering the room.

The Depressed Lady

She wore a green, silk dress, and she stood near the top of the stairs, looking as though she wanted to make herself stand out. She appeared to be very pretentious of herself. When she saw Victoria and I, she appeared to have sadness in her eyes. I would also look like that if almost all of my family had died early. She did not seem to get over these deaths, despite the fact that it was almost two decades later. She must have been like that for all these years, I thought. Lady Violet just stood there and stared at us for about ten seconds, and then she said, "thank you, Joan", to Miss Douthwaite.

Miss Douthwaite walked away, and Lady Violet spoke to us.

"So, do you want to use my telephone?" she asked, suddenly changing her dreary look into apparent enthusiasm.

"Yes, please", Victoria said, "and thank you very much".

"There's no need to thank me", replied Violet, trying to make herself appear as kind and caring as possible.

She showed us to where the telephone was in her lounge upstairs. On the way there, she said to us, "so, I heard you had a crash".

"That's right", said Victoria, "and it looks like we're stuck here until help arrives".

"I think you may be here a while", replied Violet, "there is nothing out here for miles except this house and us".

"But help will come?"

"It might, but it might not. Do you know who to telephone?"

"Well, no..."

"Then how are you going to use my telephone?" said Violet, suddenly snapping at us.

"I don't know, but we might be stuck out here for a while unless we do".

"I'll ask John who to telephone. He should be in here".

I tried to picture John in my head. So far, all of the employees in here seemed to be above 50, so I assumed John would be no different.

My assumption was right. When we entered the room, we saw John, the butler. Like Miss Douthwaite, he looked like he was in his 60s. In the lounge, there were three people: the butler, a woman and a man who both appeared to be married. The woman was fairly young looking, but the man looked twice her age.

"Who are you?" asked the woman, in a stereotypically British accent.

"My name is Victoria, and this is Janet", my friend said, "we've been in an accident, and we would like some help. Lady Violet has kindly allowed us to use her telephone".

"It's right here", replied John, pointing to the telephone.

"Do you know who we can call?" asked Victoria.

"As a matter of fact, I have a friend who deals with these sort of things", the butler replied, picking up the phone and dialling a number.

The Depressed Lady

Then something unexpected happened.

"What on Earth?" said John, trying the number again.

"What is it?" said Victoria, looking puzzled about what had happened to the telephone.

"Something's happened to the telephone! I can't get it to work!"

"Are you sure it won't work?"

"I've tried it twice, and I can't hear anything!"

"That is strange", replied the woman, taking a sip out of her cup of tea.

"You'll have to report it to Lady Violet", said the man.

"Oh, whatever shall we do?" said the woman, trying not to sound too sarcastic.

"Are we going to be alright?" said Victoria.

"Probably. My cousin will probably let you stay here until Monday, when Miss Douthwaite goes into town. My cousin is very nice, you know". When she said that, her facial expression changed, like she was excited to be talking about her cousin.

"Well, we're very lucky for that, aren't we, Janet?" said an eager Victoria.

"Yes", I agreed, not wanting to express my real opinion about these people who I had just met.

"Is there anything else you would require, my lady?" John asked.

"No, I'm alright", replied the woman, "what about you, Tim?"

"I'm not having anything if you aren't", replied Tim, gazing at the woman with a loving stare.

"Actually, I have an idea. When do you leave?" I asked.

"We're staying here for another couple of weeks", replied the woman, "why?"

"Janet and I have money. Perhaps you could give us a lift?"

"Actually", replied Tim, "neither Mary nor I can drive. Miss Douthwaite gave us a lift here".

"Well, can't Miss Douthwaite give us a lift?" I asked, trying to talk my way out of staying in the house.

"No. She's always too busy round here, poor thing", replied Mary, again trying her best to sound sympathetic, not sarcastic.

"Anyway, Janet. We might as well pay Lady Violet to stay here. We can think things through while we're here", said Victoria. It was just like Victoria to want to stay in a place like this. She was always up for trying out new things.

"Good idea", replied Mary, "anyway, Violet is swimming in cash! She does not need any more money!"

What Mary had just said made me wonder about why she said it. I had established that Mary was potentially a very complicated character, and that she was jealous of Violet and her money. Mary had unintentionally

The Depressed Lady

hinted to us that she wanted Violet's life, and she seemed to be excited whenever she mentioned Violet. I began to suspect that there was something else to this. Additionally, when Mary said that, I thought about how Violet's wealth probably made her even more unhappy. This mansion must have been where all of her memories were made, and now that her husband, her sister and her daughter died here, it must have been awful to live here. I wanted to ask to find out more about these deaths, but I did not want to upset anyone. I could not get past the feeling that there was something mysterious about these deaths; it was just too strange for three deaths to happen in such a short period of time. I had only been through the front door for five minutes, even less than that, and my mind was lured into wanting to learn more.

I looked at Mary and her husband. They did not look like the typical husband and wife - quite the opposite. Although she came across as a fairly nice person, I was beginning to become suspicious of Mary. I also thought that about her husband, and I began to wonder if he had just married her for the money.

I looked around the room a little bit more, and I noticed a fairly peculiar photograph. It was a photograph of Violet. She was wearing the same clothing as what she had on the present day, except she was wearing purple dress a pearl necklace, and she was with another man. It was strange because the man in the photograph was different to the one in the portrait that I saw as we came into the house. Would Violet remarry? In the background, I noticed that there was a small girl, and she looked just like the one in the portrait, only younger. I began to have thoughts, and things did not add up. If the man in that photograph was the girl's real father, which he appeared to be, who was the man in the portrait? I thought it was very weird that Violet had dozens of photographs pinned up in every room that I had been in. I assumed that it would be like that for the others, as well. Victoria did not notice these photographs - instead, she decided to chat to Violet.

"It's a wonderful house you have here", Victoria said to Violet.

"I don't get that a lot", Violet replied, "so, you're from America then?"

"Yes. I have lived there all my life, and this is my first time out of the country. Quite a disastrous one, really".

"Quite. So, what is your job?"

"I don't have a job at the moment, but I want to become a Historian. I like to study historical events so I can teach people about them. I really enjoy the beauty of it", Victoria replied with great enthusiasm.

"Well, I'm sorry to say, but you can't study anything in my house. I do not allow that", replied Violet, putting her foot down immediately.

"Oh, I know. I had no intentions to. Janet and I came here to see the sights in the museums. Do you know where the Great Mining Memorial Museum is?" said Victoria, trying to change the subject because she was worried that Violet would kick them out of the house for no apparent reason.

"I've never heard of it in my life. It can't be round here".

"We seemed to get lost on the way".

"It would appear. So, how did you manage to crash right next to my house?"

"Well, I'm used to driving on the right, and I got rather confused when I had to drive on the left".

"What's so confusing about it?"

"I don't know. It just is. Anyway, I crashed into a tree about half a mile away from here".

"And you saw my mansion and you wanted to get help from here?"

"Yes. Now we are going to be in serious debt".

The Depressed Lady

"Well, don't think I'm going to be giving you money! My grandfather worked hard for this!" said Violet, beginning to get very angry. She was an incredibly complicated woman - her personality repeatedly changed every few seconds. One moment, she was nice and friendly, but the next, she was angry and spiteful, and then it changed back to her nice personality, and so on.

"I didn't mean that. I'm sorry if it sounded like that", said Victoria, trying her best to calm Violet down.

"Anyway, feel free to explore the house, but don't take anything! My maid and butler will be watching both of you like a hawk! One last thing, you can go into any room except for the one next to my bedroom. You can't go in there!"

"Why not?" I asked, feeling like I should say something.

"That doesn't matter. You just can't go in there. You got that?"

"Yes, we have", I said.

When Violet told us not to go into that room, I immediately felt curious about what was in there. Could she be holding a secret that nobody wanted to know? This house was becoming more interesting by the minute.

After speaking to Victoria, Violet walked back into the lounge and asked John for a glass of her favourite wine, Blue Nun.

"What are we supposed to do now?" asked Victoria.

"Well, she said we can feel free to explore the house", I replied.

"But first", said Miss Douthwaite, listening to our conversation, "let me show you to your rooms".

"How long have you been stood there?" asked Victoria, extremely surprised.

"It seems like hours when she's around", replied Miss Douthwaite, giving us that dull expression.

Chapter 4

Chapter 3

Miss Douthwaite directed us to my room. It was next to Victoria's, and both rooms were fantastic. Victoria told me that she could not believe she was staying in such a house - she had never even seen one like this even in America, and neither did I. After Miss Douthwaite showed us which clothes to wear tomorrow, she told us that there was nothing else that was needed. We were then allowed to do some exploring, which was the most exciting part, and I was glad it took our minds off the stress of having to find the money for the car.

"Why don't we go outside for a while?" I asked Victoria.

"Alright. I'm keen to find out what there is outside", my friend replied, rubbing her hands together as if to say, "let's get up to something fun!"

While we were on our way outside, we heard some mumbling in the kitchen. We then walked in there to see who it was, and we came across a woman. Like Miss Douthwaite and John, she looked like she was in her sixties, and she looked extremely frustrated with her work.

"Why can't you make your food better? We have guests!" she mumbled to herself.

"Excuse me?" asked Victoria, entering the kitchen.

"Who are you!" snapped the old woman, immediately looking at Victoria with a sort of bewilderment in her eyes.

"I'm a guest at Lady Violet's house. My name is Victoria, and this is Janet", replied Victoria, trying to calm the woman down slightly.

"What do you want?" said the woman, who seemed very resentful towards anybody in the house.

"We were just waiting to see if you needed any help".

"I'm not in the mood. I'm just sick of her ordering me around all the time!"

"Well, isn't that your job?" asked an inquisitive Victoria.

"That's not the point! She's always so nasty to me! She's never mean to John, Joan or Amos, is she?"

"Who is Amos?" I asked.

"He's the gardener. By the way, my name is Margaret. I'm obviously the cook", she replied, waving her hands around the stacks of pottery and cutlery.

"We could help you a little later, if you like", I replied.

"No. That's all right. Anyway, where are you going?"

"We're going outside".

Margaret seemed rather intrigued, and her mood changed to be more enthusiastic. "Don't go near the place where it's fenced off, mind", she said.

The Depressed Lady

"Why?" asked Victoria.

"I don't know, but the fence is there for a reason".

"Do you not know why it is there?" I asked her.

"It's been there since I came here, and that was about fifteen years ago! Anyway, I've got work to do. I'll see you later".

When we left the kitchen, I was beginning to think about Margaret. There was something about her that made her seem a bit strange. I thought it was strange that Lady Violet would treat the cook differently to the other members of staff in the house. At this point, I also noticed one thing that Margaret and Miss Douthwaite had in common: they had both worked here for roughly the same periods of time. I thought that was very coincidental.

When we walked outside, we noticed what Margaret was talking about. Underneath a window, there was an area that was fenced off for no apparent reason. I thought that was very puzzling as I did not know of any reason why Violet would not have removed the fence in fifteen years. There was no construction work there or anything similar to that, so there was no reason for that to be there at all. It made the garden look messy and unprofessional. On the other hand, the rest of the garden was beautiful. There were trees and flowers everywhere in these acres of land. However, I noticed several gravestones at the bottom of the garden. I thought about who might have been buried there. Was the child buried there? I did not like to think about it, so I followed Victoria towards the violets. When Victoria sniffed the flower, Amos crept up towards her and said, "don't touch that!"

"Why?" asked Victoria, who was shocked by the surprise of Amos creeping up behind her.

"Because Lady Violet likes those roses. She likes the colour purple, and she does not like anyone to touch them, in case they get destroyed".

"Alright", replied Victoria, "does she like them because its her name?"

"Yes. She's always liked the colour. When Lucille was around...never mind. It's none of your business anyway".

Amos looked rather worried, so I asked him if there was anything troubling him.

"Just listen to this warning", he replied, "there is evil in that house. Nobody else knows it, but I know that there is. Over the past fifteen years, I have watched something very peculiar take place, and it is really frightening me". His face looked ever so serious, and it rather frightened me.

"What have you watched?" I asked, wanting to know the truth about the mysterious house.

"You wouldn't believe me if I told you. Just listen to me now. I think you should go".

"Why? What's the matter with this house?"

"It's the woman who lives in it".

"Are you referring to Lady Violet?"

"Maybe", replied Amos, turning round to see the magnificent mansion. All three of us were stood there, looking at the house, and I was thinking about what Amos had said. He knew something that nobody else knew. I thought there was something strange about Lady Violet, and I was right.

"How long have you lived here?" I asked him.

The Depressed Lady

"I've lived and worked here for over forty-five years", replied Amos, "I've enjoyed working here, outside in the garden, so I suppose it was a life well spent".

After that, Victoria and I went back into the house, where we went to the library to look at some books, leaving Amos to watch us and the world go by.

Chapter 5

Chapter 4

The night soon arrived, and Victoria and I surprisingly found ourselves getting bored, so we decided to get some supper and go to bed. We did not want anything big for supper, so we decided to get some fruit from the kitchen.

When we went into the kitchen, we saw Margaret, frustrated with her work, and she was almost crying. I felt sorry for her, as she had been resorted to this. Both Victoria and I had come from reasonably privileged backgrounds, so we had never experienced first-hand what it must have been like for these people to have to find a terrible job working for strange people in the middle of nowhere, and for so long. I felt sorry for Margaret, although I did not want to show it.

"Do you need some help with this?" asked Victoria.

"No, I'm fine", replied Margaret, sniffing a couple of times.

"No, really. I feel guilty staying here and doing nothing in return. The least I can do is the dishes. You sit down for a while", replied a kind Victoria.

"I've had some bad news", replied Margaret, sitting down.

"What?" I asked her, automatically intrigued by this bad news.

"I think you'd better see for yourself", said Margaret, pointing to the stairs.

I went upstairs, leaving Victoria to help Margaret clean up. When I got to the top of the stairs, I heard John and Miss Douthwaite arguing with Lady Violet.

"Why can't we work here for another year?" cried Miss Douthwaite, with desperation in her voice.

"I'm sorry", said Violet, "but I want some young people in here. I can't cope with old staff round here any longer. I want jobs done quicker".

"That's discrimination!" yelled John.

"Call it what you want. I decide what happens in this house!"

"You are evil!" yelled Miss Douthwaite, "after all of the things we did for you, and what do we get in return?"

"I gave you a house to live in for fifteen years! The pair of you! I didn't have to, but I gave you a home!"

"Where are we going to live now?" said John.

"I paid you well. I'm sure you have enough money to get a house", replied Violet, showing absolutely no sympathy whatsoever.

"And you're going to sack the gardener too?"

The Depressed Lady

"Oh, him? Yes...yes I am".

"I don't believe this. We made your house what it is today!" cried John. He scared me slightly, because ever since he arrived, he had never shown any emotion or any side to his personality, but now it was all exploding out. I thought that he was going to hit Violet at that moment.

"I think you'll find my grandfather did that", replied Violet, who was becoming less interested in the conversation.

"You are going to regret this!" John and Miss Douthwaite both screamed together.

It was a shock for me to hear that conversation. How could she be so evil? I then realised how Margaret was feeling, so I went downstairs again to console her.

"I just can't believe she would do this!" cried Margaret, "she didn't seem like the type of woman to do such a horrible thing!"

"You can retire now, anyway", replied Victoria.

"I'm not even sixty yet!" yelled Margaret, walking away, realising that she would not get a descent pension.

I did not know where she went because Victoria and I did not follow her, but I suspected something was up with her; she was not in the correct state of mind. I thought about how horrid Violet had been. Why would she just randomly fire three of her staff? Then I thought about Amos. I wondered if he knew about it. That made it four staff fired. There was something wrong - I just knew it.

In fact, there was something wrong that night, because later that night, something even worse happened. It shocked me terribly. I knew something was wrong, but I could not guess what would happen next.

I was in bed at the time, but because my bedroom was next door to the upstairs lounge where Violet, Mary and Tim were having drinks, I decided to listen in to their conversation to see what else I could find out about these people.

"I need some Blue Nun", said Violet, calling John over.

Forgetting that she had fired John, it was unlikely that he would respond, so Violet noticed this after several seconds, so she went into the basement where the wine cellar was herself to look for some more Blue Nun.

It was then when it happened. Lying in my bed, where I could hear a fly land on the wall, I was suddenly frightened by a loud scream which came from downstairs. I got up and ran to where I heard this ghastly noise.

When I arrived in the basement, I saw that everybody who lived here, apart from Amos, were there before me. Victoria was stood at the bottom of the stairs, and in front of her were John, Margaret, Mary and Tim, all staring at two people: Miss Douthwaite and Violet. Miss Douthwaite was kneeling down, with her fingers pressed against the neck of Violet's motionless body. After a few seconds of silence, it was clear to me that Violet was dead, and because of the knife in the back of her neck, I knew that she had been murdered by someone I had met that day.

Chapter 6

Chapter 5

As Violet lay there on the floor with her lifeless body attracting the attention of everyone, I looked around, knowing that someone in the room (with the possibility of Amos) had killed her.

"I'll drive into town right away to go to the police!" cried Miss Douthwaite, still in shock about the dramatic event.

"Oh, no you don't!" yelled Tim, jumping in straight away.

"Why?" asked a puzzled Miss Douthwaite.

"Do you think I'm stupid? You can take the car and be off within an instant, leaving us here with no methods of communication to starve to death, while you leave the country".

"Why would I do that?"

"Because you murdered Violet. Now that you've killed her, you can take Violet's car and drive away, just like your plan!" cried Tim, extremely quick to place the blame on Miss Douthwaite.

"I did not kill her!" she cried. I did not know whether to believe her or not. Everybody else in the room was just watching the pair of them argue, not saying anything else, when Mary interrupted.

"Somebody planned this!" she said, with her entire body still shaking, having been stunned like an electric cable had hit her.

"How?" said Tim.

"Because the telephone wires have been cut, haven't they? Do you think it is a coincidence that John could not telephone someone earlier, and now this happens?" replied Mary, who was trying her best to put two and two together.

"But we can still use the car", said Tim.

"I'm not so sure. Somebody here killed Violet, and..."

"They might not be in this room", Victoria interrupted, "Amos is not here".

"Thank you for pointing that out", Mary said with a slightly sarcastic tone of voice, "anyway, as I was saying, nobody takes the car anywhere. Until this murder is solved, I am not allowing anyone to leave this house".

"Where does Amos sleep?" asked Victoria.

"I think he sleeps in his little hut outside. He's probably there now, gathering his things together, looking for Violet's car keys".

"You must not jump to conclusions yet. Six people, including you, had the motive to murder Violet. Anyone could have killed her".

The Depressed Lady

"Maybe I can help", I said.

"You?" replied Mary, "how can you help to solve the murder?"

"Well, Victoria and I are studying History back in America. Although we have never been involved in something like this, the study of History involves analysing things and making deductions. We may be able to help", said I, trying my very hardest to persuade the woman to investigate the murder. I had had the sense of foreboding as I entered the house, and I was also warned by Amos that something bad was going to happen in the house, and of course, it did. I could not help but think I could have prevented it from happening if I was more sharp, and did not let my rational mind overtake the stupid fantasies. Although anybody who walked into the house could have sensed the evil around them, but that did not stop me from thinking that I was somehow responsible for the death, so I wanted justice for Violet.

"Of course we can", added Victoria.

"I don't think so. For all I know, you could be the murderer! Isn't it a coincidence that she dies when you two arrive here. It sounds a bit fishy to me!" cried Mary, starting to make accusations early on.

"And why on Earth would we want to kill Violet?" I asked her. That was an insult. From the moment I had seen the woman, I knew that she was slightly insane. I think that she felt the same way about me, too, because of the way that she looked at me when I entered the room. I did not want to look at her, or talk to her, because I had a strong inkling that she was the person who had committed this horrific crime.

"Don't be silly, Mary, they did not kill Violet", said Tim.

"And why are you jumping to her defence?" said Mary, still showing that her tone of voice had changed from smooth to croaky.

"Well, I know the real murderer will get away with it if these people do not investigate. It is the only hope we have of catching the killer. I'm not the expert on this kind of thing", said Tim, "now listen, your head is all over the place at the moment. I suggest that everybody goes to bed now to get over the shock. Lock your doors. We'll start with things tomorrow".

"What about Violet?" I asked.

"I'm an undertaker", replied Tim, "so I will be able to sort things out for her, and I will arrange the funeral to be in the garden, where the rest of her relatives are buried".

After that, Victoria and I went to my room to talk about things. That was the first time I had heard a little background on Tim's life. I had no idea that he was an undertaker - that meant he was used to seeing dead bodies, so that would not have bothered him. Was that my first lead?

"I don't think we can do this", Victoria said.

"Why not?" I asked her.

"Because I don't think we have the skills to solve the murder!"

"Listen, you heard what that stupid woman, Mary, said. We will not get out of here until the killer is caught, so our only choice is to solve the murder".

"I suppose you're right, but where do we start?"

The Depressed Lady

"Why don't we make a list of all the suspects, and evaluate how likely they are to be the murderer".

"Alright. We can do that tonight, and move on with things tomorrow".

"Let's start with John, the butler. He could have wished Violet dead as she sacked him".

"I don't think he's the murdering type. He's too old", I said, slightly ashamed of what I had just said, thinking myself as an ageist.

"What about Miss Douthwaite? She had the same motive, but do you think she has the character of a psychotic murderer?"

"She was found kneeling over the body, so it seems she was the first one to be there. Unless the killer was able to get out another way, it looks like she did it".

"I don't know. It depends on how long it took for her to get down there", I said, trying to think about things more deeply.

"Or get to the door leading to the basement. It depends on where she was at the time of the screaming".

"What about Margaret, the cook? She had a stronger motive, because she was poorer than Miss Douthwaite and John. She may have done it".

"I do not know what to think of her", said, trying to reserve my judgement of Margaret until I had conversed with her more, "and what about Amos, the gardener?"

"He seemed nice enough. I mean, he took the time to let us into the house", said Victoria, who did not come up with a very strong argument.

"Yeah, I don't think he did it", I added, knowing that Amos was not the usual murderer, "anyway, do you think he found out about his job loss?"

"I don't know. I don't think Violet had the chance to tell him", said a slightly sympathetic Victoria.

"What about Mary and Tim?" I asked, trying to expand more on their characters.

"Well, they would inherit the house when Violet died, because she told me herself that there was nobody else related to her but her cousin, Mary".

"And Tim said he was an undertaker, so that is not the best paid job in the world. It's clear that he has only married Mary for the inheritance and the money".

"He's too old for her anyway. And I think that Mary could easily kill Violet. It's just her character. She's a little bit...untrustworthy".

"I agree", I said, thankful that I was not the only person who had that opinion of Mary.

"Also, I think the position of the body was important. Can you remember how Violet was positioned when you saw her?"

The Depressed Lady

"She was lying on her side, with the knife in the back of the neck, and her head was in the doorway of the wine cellar", I replied.

"So, the murderer followed her down into the wine cellar, with the knife, and stabbed her when she opened the door to the wine cellar".

"What about the bottle of wine?" I said, going into much more detail.

"What about it?" asked a seemingly interested Victoria.

"It wasn't smashed, but I noticed that in the wine cellar, there was a bottle of wine on the floor of the basement. Her hand looked like she had gripped the bottle, and the bottle was at the other side of the room. I don't think anyone else noticed it".

"So the murderer waited until she had chosen the bottle until they killed her. Why would they do that? It would only mean risking more noise because she would obviously drop the bottle. If it was me who killed her - I'm not saying I did - but if I did, I would have killed her before she opened the door, and it was not guaranteed that she would scream. Why wait until she chose the bottle of wine?"

"We'll have to try to find that out tomorrow".

"There is another thing we'll have to find out".

"What?"

"We need to find out where all of the knives were in the house, and who had access to them".

"That is a really good point", said Victoria, jumping out of bed slightly, "well, I'm going to go to bed for now, not that I'll get any sleep".

"Me neither", I laughed.

I said goodnight to Victoria, and in my head, all through the night, I was thinking about who could have killed Violet.

Chapter 7

Chapter 6

The morning eventually arrived, and Victoria and I were both ready to question the six suspects in order to establish where everybody was at the time of the murder. This was important because we may have been able to fish out the liar if we knew exactly where everybody was when they heard the scream.

The first person we decided to interview was John, the butler. We knocked on the door of his room, and when he answered, he looked like he had a sleepless night. His eyes were baggy and bloodshot. It would have surprised me to hear that he had any sleep at all. I tried to take in every detail on the expression on his face, but it was pointless, as his facial expression gave nothing away, since he looked neither apprehensive or caring towards the incident the night before.

"As you may have guessed, John, we are here to talk to you about last night", started Victoria.

"I don't know anything about the murder", he quickly replied, changing his facial expression from dull to rather excited.

"We are not accusing you of anything", said Victoria, "but we need to know where you were when you heard the scream. It would be a great aid to us if you told us".

"I was in the dining room, looking into the garden, whilst talking to Miss Douthwaite".

"What were you talking about?"

"Our plans for the future".

"And what are your plans?"

"We have none. We do not know what to do now that we cannot be welcomed here", replied John, looking down at the floor.

"Who said that?" I asked him.

"What do you mean? Nobody needs to say anything. Our boss is dead, and once this murder is solved, we will have to be out of here".

"Don't jump to conclusions", I said, feeling sorry for the elderly man, "perhaps Mary and Tim will let you work here until you retire".

"I just need the money to live", he said, with his head in his hands.

"I know. Moving on, when you heard the scream, how long did it take you to get to the basement door?" asked Victoria.

"I can't run fast, but Miss Douthwaite walked faster than I can. It took her about ten seconds to get there".

"And did you see anyone running?"

The Depressed Lady

"No. Nothing. By the time I got down the stairs to the basement, I saw Margaret stood near the body, while Miss Douthwaite was kneeling over her. Miss Douthwaite and I are innocent. I'm not so sure about Margaret, because she was the only other person in the room at the time".

"Is there another exit apart from the basement door?"

"Yes. There is a window next to the cellar, but it is small, and it is difficult to open".

"How do you know it is difficult to open?"

"Once, I dropped a bottle of Lady Violet's favourite wine, and it reeked for hours. I had to open the window to let the smell out".

"Alright", I said, thinking that it was an acceptable justification for opening the window, "one more thing. Where are all the knives in the house kept?"

"I think they are all in the kitchen. Margaret will tell you more, I should imagine".

"Thank you for your time. Do you know where we can find Miss Douthwaite?"

"I hope you're not accusing her of it!"

"We're not accusing anybody at the moment. It's early days. We just need to make sure that she was with you at the time of the scream. We need to question everybody, including Mary and Tim".

"I think the murderer is probably that Tim. You didn't hear this from me, but I heard that he is nearly twice as old as her. He's obviously in this for the money", said John, switching to the gossip.

"That's what we thought. Anyway, where did you hear that from?"

"Margaret told me. I don't know where she got that from. You'll have to ask her".

"We will", I said, beginning to get more interested in the murder case.

The next person on the list to interview was Miss Douthwaite. When we entered the room where she was, the first thing I noticed was her eyes. Like John, she looked like she had no sleep for the whole night.

"So, can you tell me where you were when you heard the scream?" I asked her.

"I was stood by the window in the dining room, talking to John", she replied, quietly.

"And what were you talking about?"

"Our plans for the future, mainly. We have no idea what to do now that she's dead. Mind you, if she was going to die, I'm glad she died that way".

"What an awful thing to say!" I cried, unable to cover my horrified look.

"If you were in my position you'd be saying the same thing! That woman deserved to die, and I hope the killer gets away with it!"

"Is that because you did it?"

"No, I have an alibi - John".

"I don't think a fiancée is a good alibi".

"What?"

"I know that you are engaged to be married to John".

The Depressed Lady

"How did you work that out?" said Miss Douthwaite, knowing that she had been caught out.

"Obviously, yesterday, I saw a ring on your finger, just like John's. When the news about the murder got out, you covered up your finger, hoping that I would not notice".

Miss Douthwaite sighed. "Alright", she said, "but we did not kill her!"

"It means you have no strong alibi for the time of the murder. You two could have been in it together".

"No! No!"

"Janet", said Victoria, "it's a little early to be making accusations at the moment. It's early days, remember? We are only here to establish where everybody was at the time of the murder".

"And we are no further forward. We have no evidence to say that John and Miss Douthwaite were together in the dining room. Either one of them could have killed her, then the other made a plan to establish the alibi".

"Well, we have no proof either way. We'll come to this later".

"By the way, Miss Douthwaite, did you hear anyone crying in the kitchen?"

"As a matter of fact, I heard a woman crying in the kitchen. I take it was Margaret".

"But you didn't see her?"

"No, but who else could it be?"

"Thank you for your time", I said, leaving things as open as possible.

In my mind, I thought it had to be Margaret who was crying in the kitchen, but I could not shake the feeling that someone was in there with her, and it was not her who was crying. Although I only knew her for a day, I did not think she was the type to cry over something. I knew that I may have been wrong, but I always listened to my instincts.

When we walked into the kitchen to interview Margaret, I noticed that she was sat at the staff's dining table, reading Shakespeare. That struck me as odd as she did not seem like the type of person to be reading Shakespeare. Maybe I was wrong? I watched her eyes. Although we entered the room with enough noise to distract someone, her attention was still completely focussed on the book. Her eyes were moving fairly slowly, so perhaps she was a beginner reader. Then I thought, is she reading this book to come across as an intelligent woman? It did seem a little strange that she should still be reading a book while we entered the room.

"Margaret?" I said, almost whispering.

"Hello. I was just sat here reading", Margaret replied.

"So I can see. I just need to ask you a few questions relating to the murder last night".

"I don't think I can help, but go ahead", said Margaret, appearing confident and jolly - a side of Margaret I never thought existed.

"Where were you at the time of the scream?" Victoria asked her.

"I was sat in here, alone", Margaret replied without thought or consideration.

The Depressed Lady

"Alright, and what were you doing?"

"Nothing, really. Just sat here, thinking about things".

"Were you not crying about what had happened to you?"

"No. I almost was, but I'm a strong woman".

I looked at Victoria, and she looked back.

"Alright, and was there anyone else with you when you heard the scream?"

"Nobody was in here with me".

"Did you see anyone?"

"No".

"Did you hear anyone talking?"

"I think I heard Miss Douthwaite and John talking to each other in the dining room, but I can't be certain".

"And what did you do when you heard the scream?"

"I got up out of my chair, and ran to the basement. It took me about ten seconds".

"How fast can you run?" I asked, going into as much detail as possible.

"Not very fast, but as you can see, it wouldn't take me that long to leave the room, walk three feet down the hall and enter the basement".

"Was there anyone else there when you got down there?"

"Yes. When I saw the body, my surroundings were completely gone out of my head. All I could focus on was Lady Violet, lying there. I saw Miss Douthwaite, who was just ahead of me, and she knelt down and felt her pulse, I think".

"One more thing. Are all the knives kept in here?"

"Yes, and before you ask, there is only one missing, and I know who took it".

"You do?!" Victoria and I yelled together, thinking that this was a massive breakthrough in the case already.

"Yes. Amos came in here and took it. He said he needed to borrow something sharp to cut the weeds or something, so I let him borrow the knife that I did not use very often, providing he returned it today".

"Are you absolutely sure that knife was the murder weapon?"

"Yes. Go and look yourself".

I looked at the rack where all of the knives were kept, and it was true. There was only one space, and that had to be the murder weapon. I went in that room suspecting Margaret, but now, I realised that she had given me a vital clue.

Chapter 8

Chapter 7

The next person who I planned to interview was Mary. In my opinion, Mary seemed like a strange person, and there was something odd about her, like she had the character to commit the crime, even if it was her own cousin. When Victoria and I entered the room, I saw Tim and Mary together. I asked Tim to leave for five minutes while I spoke to Mary about this serious matter. He agreed, so the conversation began.

"So", I asked Mary, "the most important thing that I need to know is where you were when Violet screamed".

"I did not actually hear the scream, but just before the murder, I needed to go to the toilet, so I went there".

"Was Tim alone?" asked Victoria.

"Yes. He was alone when I left him. Well, anyway, when I finished in the bathroom, I walked out of the door, walked further along the corridor, and I saw Tim, rushing down the stairs".

"Where on the stairs was Tim?"

"What do you mean?"

"Was he at the top, or the bottom?"

"He was near the bottom. Anyway, I saw Tim, and I saw him run into the basement, so I followed him. When I got there, I saw everybody else there before me".

"Where was everybody stood?"

"Well, if you must know, Miss Douthwaite was leaning over the body, then Margaret was stood there, then I think it was John, then Tim, then me".

"Who do you think killed her?"

"I don't know. I really don't know. The four members of staff all had the motive, so it was obviously one of them. The question is, who?"

"I have already interviewed three of them, and I also need to ask you one more question".

"What is that?"

"Please do not take offence, but how long have you been married to Tim?"

"Just over three years. Why?"

"I just need to know the background of Violet's life".

"Why? I'll tell you the background of Violet's life. This is the house she was brought up in, by her father, and his father after that. When she was 24, she got married, had the child, and watched the close members of her family die, one by one, leaving her alone in this house".

"I know all that already. I just wanted to know everything possible about her".

"There is nothing else tell, really. Anyway, are you accusing my husband of marrying me so he could inherit this place?"

"I don't know. Again, I don't want to offend you, but it is a possibility".

The Depressed Lady

"For God's sake! That is a stupid idea!"

"Can I have a look at several of Violet's personal possessions?"

"Feel free, but make sure you make them useful".

I looked through a few of the drawers, and I noticed something. It was rather strange. It was of Violet, standing next to a mirror, posing.

"She did some modelling when she was young", Mary said, noticing me with the photograph. That all made sense to me now, although I could not understand why she would want to model; she did not seem to be the type of person to do that kind of thing.

My time with Mary was finished for the moment, and it was now Tim's turn.

Mary left the room, allowing Tim to be talked to with only Victoria and I in the room.

The first question, like everyone else, was, "where were you when you heard the scream?"

"I was in the lounge", Tim quickly replied.

"And what did you do when you heard the scream?"

"The scream that I heard was quite faint, so I decided to finish my drink. That took about five seconds, give or take. Then I heard footsteps, so I decided to quickly walk down the stairs to see what all the fuss was about".

"Did you see Mary?"

"No, she went to the toilet. Anyway, when I got down the basement, it looked like everyone was there before me, except for Mary, and yourselves".

"What was everyone doing?"

"Nothing, really. Everyone was looking at the body".

"Now, may I ask you something a little more personal?"

"Does it help to solve the murder?"

"It might".

"Then go ahead".

"Well, how many years older are you than Mary?"

Tim sighed, and looked at Janet. "If you must know, I am almost twenty years older than her. And before you ask, no, I did not marry her for the inheritance money. I love my wife, and she feels the same way about me!"

"Nice house you have, here", said Victoria, all of a sudden.

"Don't try and intimidate me. It might seem unusual to you, but Mary and I love each other, and that's all there is to it".

"Fair enough, but we need to know, when was the last time you saw Amos?"

"I don't know. Days ago, perhaps".

"And you haven't seen him since?"

"Why should I? He works in the garden, and I spend most of my time in here. I rarely go outside: there is nothing to do, and the typical British weather at the moment means we can't go outside half of the time anyway".

The Depressed Lady

"Alright. The reason I asked you that is because we both think that Amos is the most likely person to be the murderer, since a witness has informed us that he came into the house to borrow a knife to cut some weeds".

"Why would he want to that? I would assume he has his own tools!"

"That's what we thought, which is why we're suspicious of him".

"Solve this murder and we will make you richer than you have ever been!"

"It's not about the money".

After we had finished with Tim, we quickly went to talk to Amos, who was outside, as usual. When we first approached him, he said, "I have nothing to say to you".

"And why is that?" Victoria asked him.

"Because there is no way in which I can assist the case".

"How do you know there has been a murder?"

Amos paused for two seconds. "Miss Douthwaite informed me this morning", he said. Instantly, I thought that was a lie, but I could always check with Miss Douthwaite later.

"I think you can assist us, Amos. You just don't know you can".

"How can I help you when I wasn't even in the house at the time?"

"Where were you last night?"

"All night I was in my cabin, just over there, like I always am". He pointed his arm towards his cabin. It did not look very big, but Amos seemed happy with it.

"We need to talk to you about the knife you borrowed" I said to him.

"What about it?"

"Where is it now?"

"I can't remember!"

"Can you think?"

"I don't know! You're putting pressure on me!"

"I'll go away and have a look around the garden for a minute. It might ease the pressure a little", said Victoria.

"Alright", I replied.

Victoria was right. Amos felt more relaxed with just me around.

"I think it's in the cabin. No, it is definitely in the cabin".

"Alright".

"Before we go in there, there is something I want to tell you".

"What?" I asked him, eagerly.

"I did not commit the murder, so don't get excited, but there is something that may help the case".

The Depressed Lady

"What is it?"

"It's probably nothing, but years and years ago, when the child was still around, you know, Violet's kid?"

"Go on".

"Well, just before she went, there were these people hanging around the house, and I saw them visit a couple of times".

"Can you describe them to me?"

"I always thought it was a bit odd, the way that they dressed. They always wore colourful clothing".

"And what has this got to do with the case?"

"Like I said, probably nothing, but then again, isn't it strange how the child goes when they arrive? It's something to think about".

"I will", I said, turning round to go to the cabin.

When we got there, I noticed that the inside of the cabin did not contain many things; it was just the basic needs.

"You might think this place is crap, but I enjoy this life", said Amos, searching for the knife.

It did not take long for both Amos and I to search the cabin for the knife. When we had completed the search, I found that the knife was not there. At that point, I was certain Amos had done it, so I ran out of the cabin, found Victoria nearby, and ran into the house, where we both ran upstairs together to discuss possible murderers.

"It has to be Amos!" Victoria yelled, running into my bedroom.

"Not necessarily", I said, "Amos could have left the cabin for a minute, and the murderer could have took the knife from the cabin".

"Do you think that's likely? I mean, who would want to raise suspicion like that?"

"I think Amos has raised enough suspicion".

"Have you asked him if he left the cabin?"

"What's the point? He's only going to say he did. If he did not leave the cabin, he is the only person who could have done it".

"I suppose so. Anyway, bearing that in mind, who do you think killed Violet, now that we have established where everyone was?"

"To be perfectly honest, we are not that much further forward. Any one of the six people could have killed Violet".

"If it was Miss Douthwaite, John had to be involved, and if it was John, Miss Douthwaite had to be involved".

"That's true. Miss Douthwaite could have took the knife from Amos' cabin, snook down into the cellar, killed Violet, remained there, and made it look like she had just arrived there before Margaret. John could have realised that she had no alibi, so he gave his fiancée and himself an alibi by saying they were together at the time. John, on the other hand, could have killed Violet, ran quicker than he makes out up the basement stairs, waited for Margaret to run out, and ran behind her, pretending that he was just behind her".

The Depressed Lady

"What about Margaret?"

"Margaret could have covered Violet's mouth, killed her, ran to the top of the stairs, screamed to give the impression that it was Violet who was screaming, and then waited for Miss Douthwaite to run out so she could follow her down".

"And what about Tim?"

"Depending on how long it took for Violet to get the wine, Tim could have snook down the stairs, opened the window before killing Violet, killed her, and quickly climbed out of the window which leads to the floor of the garden path, ran round the front of the house, looked through the window to see when John went into the basement, quickly opened the door and ran to the stairs, where he could have waited for Mary to come out of the bathroom, where he could have quickly turned his head back round, making it look like he had just come down from the stairs".

"That's quite a detailed explanation. When did you come up with that?"

"I'm just considering the mind of the murderer. If it was Tim, I think that's what I would do".

"And what about Mary?"

"Mary could have pretended to go to the toilet, but when she left the lounge that Tim was in, she could have quickly crept down the stairs, snook past all of the servants who were busy doing something else at the time, covered Violet's mouth, and killed her. This would give her enough time to climb out the window where she could scream into the basement when she climbed out. This would have gave her the opportunity to run round the front of the house, look through the window of the front door, wait for everyone to go down there, and arrive last. Nobody seen her at any time between when the murder took place, and when she arrived in the basement, so she could have been carrying out her plan then".

"And Amos?"

"Quite simply, Amos could have taken the knife, killed Violet, opened the window and jumped out, making his escape before Miss Douthwaite could get in".

"You see, here lies the problem. How did Amos know about the window?"

"He works in the garden, remember? He could have spotted the window one day from the outside".

"That fits. But the thing is, the killer would have to be really fast, wouldn't they?"

"This murder was probably pre-medicated. The murderer knew exactly where everyone else was at the time, and they had planned their escape".

"So, what else can you say about the murderer?"

"They had to know that Amos had the knife, and they would want to implicate him. Otherwise, why go to that much trouble to get that knife when the murderer could have simply took it from the kitchen?"

"I don't know, but it is definitely that knife?"

"It's the only one that's missing".

"That means another thing".

"What's that?"

"The murderer had to know that Amos had taken the knife from the kitchen".

"Good thinking. You and I make a good team".

"However, that does not exactly rule anyone out. Anyone could have looked out of the window and saw Amos with the knife".

The Depressed Lady

"What we have to think is who had it in for him".

"I don't think anybody would confess to disliking Amos".

"Neither would I. There is also another thing. If the murderer got out by the window, how could they take the time to shut it as well?"

"That is a good point. It would be very risky for them to do that, in case they were spotted".

"Exactly, which means that the murderer probably left the room by the door. So, it is unlikely that Mary, Tim or Amos could have done it. It still does not rule them out, though".

"It's just a shame we got there later than the others".

"I know. If only I could see the order the people arrived. I don't know why, but it's just a feeling that I got when I entered the room. The way everybody was arranged had something to do with it. I just have a feeling about it".

"What do you mean?"

"I don't know. Maybe it's the way Miss Douthwaite was stood kneeling over the body, maybe it's the order everyone was stood in, or it might be something else".

"All this stuff is frying my brain. It's just too much to take in; I can't think straight!"

"I think it's time to hit the hay. Goodnight".

"Goodnight. Lock your doors".

When Victoria left the room, I went straight to bed. About an hour later, while I was still awake, I heard quiet footsteps walking along the corridor. It was about ten o'clock, so it was quite late. Then, the person put a piece of paper through the bottom of the door, and I heard them walk away almost silently.

After they had gone, I crept towards the light, with the door still locked, and switched it on. I picked up the piece of paper, and I did not know what to think when I saw what was written on it:

"I saw the murder.

I saw him put the knife in her back.

The murderer is Amos".

Chapter 9

Chapter 8

Unsurprisingly, this note made me think. My first thought was, if Amos did do it, how did the person see him? Obviously, one person was lying, and the question was, who?

I had no idea what to think of this. Was the person who wrote this lying or telling the truth? If they were telling the truth, why not come forward and just say? No, the person has to be lying, I thought. It must have been designed to confuse me, so there were further complications with the investigation. I came up with two possible solutions to this, as there were only two. The first one was that Amos did it and made it look like he had been falsely implicated. The second possible solution was that whoever did this did their very best to try and frame Amos for the murder. I decided to wait until morning before disturbing Victoria to see what she thought about this.

After a long, sleepless night, the morning eventually came, and I went to the room next door to see what Victoria thought. To my surprise, Victoria had also received a note, with the same words written on, and the same handwriting.

"So, who had it in for Amos?" Victoria said.

"I don't know! This just complicates things even more!"

"I wouldn't stress about it. Perhaps we should put this to one side until later purposes".

"You're right. Anyway, it's Violet's funeral today".

"Already?"

"Yes. Tim has already sorted the body out, so there is no point in waiting, is there?"

"I guess not".

Just then, we were interrupted by a knock on the door, and Mary entered the room.

"Can I come in?" she asked.

"Of course", Victoria replied.

"So, are you any further with the case?"

"I don't know, to be honest", I said, "anyway, is a vicar coming over?"

"Yes, later. Before she died, she left me a note saying that she wanted to be buried next to the rest of her relatives; all six of them, who lived and died here like she did".

"So, can you just bury her without her body been examined?"

"Last night, Miss Douthwaite, Tim and I went to the police, where they said they would look into it, but I told them that there were already two people looking into it, and that they had got nowhere. I told them that you were studying History. The police can have time to look into it, but I told them that Violet was stabbed, she was found in the cellar, and that's it. It looks like I have all my hopes on you two to solve the murder of my cousin".

I looked at Victoria, who looked back.

"What time did you go out last night?" I asked Mary.

The Depressed Lady

"I don't know. Maybe 9:30?"

"And what time did you get back?"

"It was a fairly long drive, so we got back at about 11:30".

"So, you, Tim and Miss Douthwaite are excluded from sending the note!"

"What note?"

"The note that someone pushed through Victoria's door and mine last night".

"What?! Let me see that!"

Mary read the note, and asked me, "when did this happen?"

"Last night, when you were out".

"So that means Amos did it!"

"Not necessarily".

"Then whoever sent this note was the killer!"

"Yes. I think you're right".

"So that means that you only have three suspects left: John, Margaret and Amos".

"Maybe, but maybe there are two people working together to pull this off".

The night before, I considered that possibility, and I tried to work things out in my head, but it was just too complicated.

"Anyway, when we go to the funeral, which is in a few minutes, I would like you two to come with me, and nobody else", Mary said.

"Why?" I asked, "we only knew her for one day".

"Violet would not like only one person attending her funeral. Anyway, I do not want to be alone when I am there".

"Alright, we'll do it", Victoria agreed.

Immediately, Victoria, Mary and I went into the garden to bury Violet. When we got there, we found that the headstone was already in the ground, and I was shocked to find out how old she was. Her gravestone said:

"Violet Carson

Died 3 August 1960

Aged 46 years".

To me, Violet looked lots younger than she was, for someone who had lost everybody close to her. I then looked around the gravestones. All of the words had eroded away over the years, but I saw the six headstones, knowing that underneath one of them, there was the body of her child. It was probably the one next to Violet,

The Depressed Lady

as before Violet, the child was the last one to die. The thought of a child been buried there gave me the shivers. I looked at the headstone, and I was just thinking about who could do this to her. I knew it must have taken some brains to plot something like this. However, how could they plot her murder when they did not know that she was going into the cellar? The complications of the investigation put even more pressure on me, as I was thinking to myself, "how am I going to solve this? This was the work of a criminal mastermind!" I may have exaggerated slightly, but I had to come up with a plan to make them trip.

After the service, the vicar returned home, and Mary sat down on a nearby bench. Victoria approached her, to check if she was alright. Mary just sat there, with tears in her eyes, saying, "where did it all go wrong?" "I'm sorry for your loss", said Victoria.

"Violet must have done something really awful to someone to make them kill her", said Mary, appearing as though she did not listen to Victoria.

"We are doing our very best to find this monster", said Victoria.

"It's just the thought of them been out there...somewhere in this house right now. Find them...find them, please".

After that, nobody else said anything. I looked around as all of the suspects were in sight. I saw Amos, trimming the hedges. Margaret was stood in the window, washing up. Miss Douthwaite and John were stood outside, having a cigarette, while John put his hand on Miss Douthwaite's. Tim walked over to Mary, and put his hand on hers. It was awful to know that I had just looked at the murderer without even knowing.

Later, I was still thinking about the case, going over everything in my mind again and again. I got thirsty, so I walked downstairs for a drink of water. Before I got to the stairs, I heard Mary and Tim arguing.

"Why can't you just believe me!" cried Tim.

"I trust you! I do! It's just you haven't been proven innocent yet!"

"For all I know, you could have killed her!"

"And you would love that, wouldn't you? You would inherit the house while I'm getting hung for my cousin's murder!"

"Don't talk like that! I did not marry you for the house or the money!"

"Of course you did! Little Timothy Crabble, marrying the rich heiress! You make me sick!"

"Fine. I'll get a divorce!"

"I hope you do!"

"You are a selfish witch! Why can't you just accept, that this is not about the money or the house! It's about you!"

"Well, you don't seem to think that because you are getting a divorce. I know your plan, Tim. If you divorce me, you'll make the American kids think that you couldn't have killed Violet because you left the house for me! I know your plans!"

"Shut up! Just shut up!"

I heard Tim coming towards the door, so I quickly ran down the stairs.

The Depressed Lady

When I entered the kitchen, I saw that the light was out, and Margaret was nowhere in sight. In fact, there was nobody around. I got my drink, sat for a couple of minutes, finished it, and washed it for Margaret.

When I returned to the hallway, I was shocked to see that Tim was lying there. He was not moving. I was terrified for the worst, but I felt his pulse. In my mind, if he was dead, I would have felt even more guilty because I let someone else die. Feeling his wrist, I did not detect a pulse at all. Panicking, I felt for five more seconds, and fortunately, I detected a pulse. He was alive, but only just. Because somebody had assaulted Tim, I could have been able to get closer to finding the murderer.

Chapter 10

Chapter 9

After I realised that Tim was alive, Miss Douthwaite and John came up to us, where we managed to get him upstairs. I was just so desperate for him to remember who did this. However, more importantly, why did they do it? After about five minutes, I realised that Mary could have still assaulted Tim, and the murderer could have been someone completely different.

I waited for what seemed like hours, and Mary then came out of the bedroom where Tim was.

"He's alright, but he can't remember a thing about what had happened".

I sighed. Deep down, I knew it was too good to be true, so I knew it was back to the drawing board for me.

"He doesn't remember anything?" I asked Mary.

"Nothing. I've tried to make him remember for ages, but he just can't. He needs some rest, so I would appreciate it if you did not disturb him any more".

"Alright, but it means we are no further forward with the investigation".

"Actually..."

"What?"

"I've been doing a lot of thinking, and there is something I need to tell you".

"What?"

"It's about the deaths in this house, other than Violet".

I was beginning to get excited. From the moment that Miss Douthwaite told me about the deaths, I wanted to know more.

"What is it?" I said to Mary.

Mary started to speak. "The first death was that of Lucille, Violet's sister. Violet and Lucille were like that", she said, crossing her fingers. "Lucille died one evening when the family and friends were round for a dinner party. I was only seven at the time, but I remember seeing Lucille there...dead".

"What happened to her?"

"She died while choking on a boiled sweet. It was awful because Violet watched her die".

"How awful!"

"I know! That was only the beginning. The next to die was Robert. Violet said that he was taking tablets for his depression, since his daughter was not well, and his business failed, meaning that they could lose the house. Anyway, do you see that fence outside? That's where Robert jumped to his death".

"Good God!"

"Violet was still upset about her sister's death a couple of months before. Then came the worst part".

The Depressed Lady

"I'm not looking forward to this when there are children involved!"

"Violet's daughter died of an illness. It's a shame, really, because I used to play with her, and I had never seen her when she was ill. It was worse for Violet- she was 30, her life was starting to become amazing, and then her five year old daughter dies".

"So, what's this got to do with Violet's murder?"

"Because of this and Tim's assault, I have decided to put things to a stop, and close this door forever. These recent events have caused me to come up with two theories on Violet's murder. The first theory is that Amos is the murderer, because he still worked here when Lucille, Robert and the child were killed".

"You don't remember the child's name?"

"No, as a matter of fact, I don't. Violet never spoke of her child. It upset her too much".

"And why do you think Amos is the killer?"

"Well, because of the latest evidence, and the fact that he could have cabin fever or something. I've read about it. Been isolated for long periods of time can make people go insane!"

"And what about your second theory?"

"My second theory is that the three old deaths are natural, and Violet committed suicide".

"And what about Tim?"

"I don't know. I'm working on it, but the point is, Violet may have been thinking about it for years. She might have just had enough one day. It is possible, isn't it?"

"Then who wrote the note?"

"That could be just a hoax, couldn't it? It may be someone playing a prank on you".

"I'll think about it".

As a matter of fact, there may have been some truth in what Mary said. Unless, of course, she was the murderer herself, I started to like Mary, and I felt sorry for her. However, I was quite suspicious of her, as Lucille and Robert could have easily been murdered by her, since she knew that one day, she would own the house if anything happened to the rest of her family. It was quite strange that she was the only member of the family still alive.

Just then, we heard Tim's voice calling for me to come in to talk to him.

"Can I go in then?" I asked Mary.

"I suppose so", she replied.

I entered the room, and Tim looked half dead. Whatever was used to hit him over the head, it must have been something heavy, I thought.

"What is it?" I asked him.

"I think I can remember something about the attack", Tim replied, "it's starting to come back to me".

"Oh my, tell me", I said to him.

"I don't know who you have in mind as the murderer, but I remember walking down the stairs and into the hallway. I heard a woman's high heels walking along the corridor, and before I got the chance to turn round, I

The Depressed Lady

was struck over the back of the head with something. I don't know what it was".

"So, it was definitely a woman?"

"I heard high heels walking along the floor. Do you know of any men in this house who wear high heels?"

"Why do you think someone would do this to you?"

"I...I have no idea".

I knew he was lying, as just before the assault, he was arguing with Mary. I would not be surprised if he knew it was her who had hit him.

"Is there anything else you'd like to add?" I asked him.

"One more thing...thank you for helping me".

"It was nothing", I said, leaving the room.

When I got out, Mary quickly ran over to me, demanding to know what was said. I told her that he heard a woman's high heels coming towards him. That made Mary look relieved at it. To me, Mary was becoming my number one suspect. I left the room to go and find Victoria.

When I found her, I explained to her that Tim had heard a woman's high heels when he was struck, and Victoria jumped with joy, crying, "that's great news!"

"Why?" I asked her.

"Because today, while you were talking to Mary and all that, I was looking in Miss Douthwaite's, John's and Margaret's rooms to see if I can find anything".

"And?"

"And when I went into John's room, I found a pair of high heels, which I noticed were the ones that belonged to Miss Douthwaite!"

"Good work, Victoria!" I cried, giving her a hug.

I was thinking about things, and I did not want to get too excited in case there was another explanation, but for another time in the investigation, I felt that I was one step closer to solving the murder.

Chapter 11

Chapter 10

This revelation added even more complication to the case. It may have been completely innocent, I thought, but how did the maid end up leaving her shoes in the butler's room? That was the puzzle to me, and I needed to find out.

We found John and Miss Douthwaite together, whispering about something. I asked Miss Douthwaite to leave the room for a moment while Victoria and I talked to John.

"So, do you know where these shoes were found?" I asked him.

"Why would I?" John replied.

"They were found in your room, John, and we need to know the truth on how they got there".

"I swear down on my fiancée's life, I do not know how the shoes ended up there!"

"Has Miss Douthwaite got two pairs of shoes?"

"I don't know! Are you sure that they're hers?"

"I'm certain", replied Victoria, "I noticed the markings on them yesterday when we came in".

"Then someone must have put them there!"

"I can think of other explanations".

"Like what?"

"Like you were the ones behind all this. You killed Violet, assaulted Tim, put the note through our doors to frame Amos, and now this! I don't know what to think of this, whether they were meant to be found, or whether you were the one who assaulted Tim, hoping that he would remember the heels so that we would think a woman did it".

"I'm telling you. I do not know how they got there!"

"Maybe Miss Douthwaite knows how they got there".

"Well, why don't you ask her?"

"Oh, don't worry. We will ask her".

Miss Douthwaite was called into the room, where we asked her a few questions relating to this incident.

"Are you missing a pair of shoes?" Victoria asked her.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I am", replied Miss Douthwaite.

"Are these the ones you were looking for?" asked Victoria, showing Miss Douthwaite the pair of shoes.

"The very ones!" she cried, "where did you find them?"

"In John's room".

The Depressed Lady

"What?"

"You heard me. We found them in your fiancée's room".

"Well, what were they doing there?"

"You tell me".

"I don't know! I've been looking for my shoes in my room all morning!"

"Are those shoes that you have on now your second pair?"

"Yes. I swap them round every couple of days".

"So, were you in John's room last night?"

"No, I was not in John's room at all yesterday, or this morning".

"And when was the last time you saw the shoes?"

"When I left my room for work this morning".

"Are you sure about that?"

"Yes. Certain. Now can you leave me alone? I have work to do".

Miss Douthwaite left, and I had a discussion with Victoria.

"It looks like the murderer is trying to frame everybody but themselves", I said to her.

"It certainly looks that way. Maybe these things are designed to throw us off track".

"Probably".

We were then interrupted by Mary dashing down the stairs.

"We've found the assault weapon!" she cried.

"Good God, what is it?!" I asked Mary.

"It's a very big book from the library. I was in there this morning, and there it was. There was blood on it, and it looked like it had been recently used".

"So it's definitely the assault weapon, then?"

"Yes, one hundred percent. Tim can recall the weight of it, and he said it felt like a book".

I thought to myself, what a strange thing to say. How can someone sense what has hit their head just by feeling it for one moment?

"So, this might be able to clear some suspects. Can you tell me, who never goes into the library?" I asked Mary.

"Well, the gardener would have no means to, and the cook would not go into the library either".

"So, we cannot rule them out completely, but someone went into the library just before hitting Tim over the head. Who?"

"Sorry, I can't help but listen to your conversation", said Margaret, coming out of the kitchen.

The Depressed Lady

"And?" Victoria asked her.

"Well, I saw something that might help this investigation".

"What is it?"

"Well, earlier today, when the master was hit over the head, just before that, I noticed Amos was hanging around upstairs, just looking around".

"Why was he doing that?"

"I don't know, but it's a little bit strange if you ask me. First he goes into the house for a knife, and then, I see him in the house again, and this happens!"

"Thank you for that information. You've been the best help we've had so far!" I cried.

Immediately, Victoria and I went looking for Amos. It was getting rather late, so we thought that he might be in bed. Miss Douthwaite was outside, smoking a cigarette. We knocked on the cabin door, but there was no answer at all. We tried again. Still nothing. We opened the door, where we found that inside the cabin, Amos was lying there. Victoria went inside to see if he was alright. She came out, and when I asked her if he was alright, she simply replied, "he's dead".

Chapter 12

Chapter 11

He was just lying there, dead. At first, I thought he had been murdered too, but then there was no blood or anything to suggest he had been murdered. I noticed a note on the floor and read it out:

"This is my final note. I know what you are all thinking, but I did not kill anybody and I did not hit that man. I have been very ill recently, and I said earlier that it has been a life well spent. I died a quick and painless death, and I know that I have died a happy person. I can see where this was going to go. I know that you thought that I was the killer, but I swear to God, I could do no such thing. I do not know how the knife got from my cabin to the back of that woman, because nobody had entered my cabin that night. Of that I am certain, as I did not leave the cabin at all. I do not know how the knife left my cabin. For that, you'll have to figure out yourself. I know that I may have been acting suspicious lately, but as I said before, I did not have long left anyway, and I only kept looking in the house out of curiosity. I have no idea who would want to frame me of murder, or why. I have one more thing to say to you: that woman was not the woman you thought she was".

To me, that was an emotional, but more importantly, convincing letter of Amos' innocence. The letter was the final piece of the puzzle, as I slowly began to realise things. Piece by piece, things started to make a little bit more sense with the letter, but there were still some things unanswered. I went into the house after that to announce the death.

I found it strange, because some people, especially Mary, seemed glad that Amos was dead. From the murder, Amos was the prime suspect, but now that I was convinced of his innocence, I turned to the second person on the list: Mary.

"I've had enough of this drama!" she yelled, "when are these things going to stop?"

"Soon enough, I promise I am getting closer", I told her.

"Who do you think did it?"

"I don't know yet".

I stood there, and suddenly, I remembered something that was said to me earlier, and I thought that it might crack the entire case if I proved it to be wrong. I did not know where it came from; I just remembered the conversation that I had with this person, and if I managed to prove that what they said was a lie, I would find the murderer.

"To help me, there is something that you can do. I need Miss Douthwaite to drive me into town, so you can come with me if you want to make sure that we do not run away".

Mary agreed, and called Miss Douthwaite to take us into town.

On the way there, I was desperate for my theory to be true. I was sat in the car for the twenty minutes that it took, thinking, "what if this is true? What then?" The wait to get there was agonising, and there was very little said in the car, apart from Mary talking to me.

"So, what is it that you need to do in town?"

"I just need to make a phone call to my parents at home", I lied, "I haven't spoken to them yet since I got here, and I just thought I'd let them know I'm alright".

The Depressed Lady

"What's this got to do with the investigation?"

"Nothing. I just remembered that it is a Monday, and Miss Douthwaite needs to go into town for the shopping, and you can help her".

"Fair enough".

The conversation stopped there. When we got to town, I went into a cafe where there was a telephone. I paid for the phone call, and I telephoned who I needed to telephone. Miss Douthwaite and Mary were in the next shop getting the groceries, and Mary kept peering in suspiciously. I felt relief when I put the phone down, as my random thought turned out to be what solved the case. The lie was proven to be false, and the murder was solved.

Chapter 13: The Murderer Revealed

Chapter 12

From the beginning, it was fairly obvious, you only had to look at it in the correct way. The killer could easily fool me, as I was convinced of their innocence without even realising it. Now that I knew the truth, I knew that everything in this mystery added up, and that everybody, apart from the murderer of course, was telling nothing but the truth. I did not see who the real killer was because I did not allow myself to, but I understood the killer's motivation, and I understood completely everything that they did.

When I arrived back at the house, nobody was aware that I knew who the murderer was. I had decided not to tell them on the way home, because it would be for the best. I simply thanked Miss Douthwaite and Mary for the lift, and went upstairs, where I lied to them, saying that I was going to try to work out who the murderer was with Victoria. Actually, I was planning on telling Victoria who the murderer was, and exactly how I figured it out. I entered her bedroom, where she was sat, drawing.

"I have some news for you", I said to her.

"What's that?" she asked me.

"I know who the murderer is".

"What?! Oh, my God. Tell me".

"I will in a moment, but I would like to tell you how I worked it out first. Now, if you remember what Mary told me, that she felt that people in her family were murdered before".

"Yes?"

"Well, she was right. I'll start from the very beginning. When Violet gave birth to a baby girl, the baby's father was so mad and upset at the baby for been a girl, that he made Violet the heir, and if Violet were to die, the house would go to Lucille".

"How did you know that?"

"It was only an assumption. This was confirmed when I discovered the will of Violet".

"But Lucille died?"

"Exactly. She died, as well as Violet's husband... and child, so Violet was the only one left, or was she?"

"Well, apart from Mary, Violet had to be left with the house".

"Exactly! That is what was intended to happen!"

"What do you mean?"

"Let's start with the first murderer, shall we?"

"What are you talking about? There are two murderers?"

"I'll come back to that in a minute. For now, let's just focus on the woman who has just been murdered. Do you remember what was said in Amos' suicide note, the very last thing?"

"Yes, it said 'that woman was not the woman you thought she was'".

"And Amos was exactly right".

The Depressed Lady

"I do not understand where you are coming from".

"Do you remember the photograph of Violet standing in a mirror?"

"Yes".

"Well, that photograph deceived you, as well as me at first, for the woman who has just been murdered was not Violet, but it was Lucille".

"What?"

"Lucille and Violet were identical twins, meaning that nobody could tell the difference between the two. However, there was one way".

"And what was that?"

"Years ago, when both of the twins were alive, Lucille wore a pearl necklace every day, as seen in another photograph. This could tell the difference between the two. So, bearing that in mind, all that Lucille had to do, was pretend to put the necklace on her sister in order to try it on, choke her to death with it, leave the necklace around her neck, and stuff a piece of food down her throat. This would cause people to believe that Lucille was dead, and Violet was alive, but in reality, it was the other way round, and that is what we have missed the whole time".

"So, she killed Robert and the child?"

"She killed Robert by pushing him out of the window. It was easy to create the impression that he was taking drugs. The child, however, is a different story".

"What do you mean?"

"I remember been with Mary and she said, 'I had never seen her when she was ill'. This meant that nobody was allowed to see the child. Right?"

"Yes".

"And therefore, nobody would know what was going on behind those closed doors?"

"Where is this going?"

"Now, do you remember how many gravestones there were in that graveyard, other than Violet?"

"There were six".

"And do you remember when Mary said that all of the people who have lived and died in this house are buried here?"

"Yes".

"So, we know that Violet's grandparents lived here, so that totals two, their son and his wife totals four, Lucille totals five, and Robert totals six, so where is the child?"

"I don't know".

"And do you remember when Amos said that he remembers two people hanging around the house at the time the child went?"

"Yes".

"So, these two points both point to one thing: that the child is still alive, and she was probably adopted by those people in the funny clothes".

"What?"

The Depressed Lady

"And now I understand why all of the staff back then were fired, except for Amos, who Lucille forgot about. Lucille had fired them because she did not want the truth to come out that the child was actually alive, in case it raised the suspicion of any visitors, like ourselves. Lucille was worried that one day, the child would come back looking. Now, bearing all that I have told you in mind, I have worked out who the murderer is".

"Will you please just tell me".

"I know that the murderer, Victoria, is you".

Victoria just stood there, frozen. "Me?" she eventually said, quietly.

"Don't try to deny it. I know that you are the child of Violet. You were the daughter who was sent away, and you killed Lucille!"

"No! No! Why are you saying this?"

"Because it's the truth. It all adds up now. Your age, 21 and the age of Violet when she gave birth, 25 adds up to 46, which is how old she would be today! Also, in the suicide note of Amos, it mentions that the knife was not taken from his cabin all night, so that knife could not have been the murder weapon. So, what other knife has been taken? None at all, so the murderer must have brought their own knife in, and how could anyone else manage to do that? They would be found out in an instant if the police were to investigate, because these days, they can find records of purchases in any shop".

"There has to be another explanation for that!"

"I'm far from finished yet. You pretended to crash the car when you just noticed this house in the distance, making it look like it was completely innocent by chatting away like you always do. Then, you climbed a tree to see if you could see the house more clearly. When you got to the top of the tree, you used the knife that you brought, and cut the telephone wires connecting to the house, so later, we could not contact the outside world so easily. Your main purpose of doing this was so that you would be stuck in the house, right where you wanted to be".

"No!"

"Later, when you were introduced to 'Violet', you became so angry that you could have had this house, and she took it away from you, as well as killing both of your parents. When you saw how happy she was, that pushed you to kill her, so on the night of the murder, you forced her to go down into the wine cellar by taking her favourite bottle of wine, Blue Nun, and pouring it down the drain while pretending to wash up for an exhausted Margaret, who was too tired to notice. This would cause Violet to go down into the cellar to choose some more wine, and you hoped you could trap her".

"This is not true!"

"Yes it is. I am not finished yet. After you had killed Violet, you did not run out of the door, nor did you escape out of the window. You simply hid yourself under the stairs leading into the basement, where you knew nobody would notice as they were too busy looking at Lucille's dead body, including myself. Then, all you had to do was get out from under the stairs and pretend to arrive just after me. However, you did not realise that Amos had a knife, so when I interviewed Amos, you quickly made an excuse to leave in order to get into Amos' cabin in order to retrieve the knife. It was risky, but the only option you had, otherwise you would have been found out. This made me think that Amos was guilty. Then, you gave yourself the idea to try and frame all of the suspects by placing a note through the door, and planting the high heels in John's bedroom, in the hope of confusing me so much that I was forced to give up investigating. Now, the assault on Tim. You wanted Tim out of the way because he inherited the house that you were supposed to inherit, so you took a book from the library and struck him at the first opportunity you got".

The Depressed Lady

"No!"

"I am almost finished now. Here is the last part. Earlier on today, I telephoned Angela back at home".

"You did what?"

"You know, the woman who 'recommended we come here'?"

"What about her?"

"It turns out that she has never even been to England, and does not recall recommending you to come here. Plus, there is no such thing as The Great Mining Memorial Museum in England. You told lies. This proves that your motivation for coming to England was something that I did not want to know about, and I now know that it was murder".

Violet remained silent, and eventually confessed.

"Alright. I did it. I'm the murderer. Are you happy now?"

"I'm anything but happy", I said, "I had no idea that the murderer was always with me all along. You were the killer, and it hadn't even crossed my mind".

"How did you know it was me?"

"Apart from the knife, I think I knew deep down from the start. I knew there was something strange when you first entered this mansion. I watched you when you saw the portrait of your father and yourself as a child. The emotion in your face was incredible. Now I understand that the reason you were like that is because it was the very first time you saw what your father looked like".

"I'm sorry, Janet. I really regret doing it".

"I know you do, and I completely understand your actions. I just didn't think you were capable of murder".

"Neither did I, but I suppose you never know what you are capable of until you do it".

"So, where do we go now?"

"Are you going to tell them?"

"No. You will be put to death if I do that. Although I think that it was wrong when you assaulted Tim, you did justice for your parents at last, and you can finally put them at rest".

"Can we still be friends?"

"I don't know. I have not made my mind up yet".

To conclude this story, Miss Douthwaite and John finally married, Margaret found a better job as a chef, with higher wages, Mary and Tim divorced, and because the house was not yet legally theirs, Tim got nothing. Mary was not told of her cousin's murderer. I thought it would be best not to tell her, because she would have just been more upset if everything was explained to her. It was strange, because I remember that she mentioned playing with Victoria when they were children, and Mary did not even know that it was her, or that is what I thought.

When we left the house, all of the staff came out to say goodbye, and Mary was stood in a window, looking at Victoria, with an expression in her face which perhaps showed that she realised something, such as Victoria been her long lost second-cousin after all this time. She stood in the window, and tears went down her face. I think that deep down, Mary knew who Victoria really was. Finally, when Victoria looked at the house one last time, she pointed at the window and said "look, I think I can see my parents".

The Depressed Lady

I did not see anything, but she said she did, so maybe in her mind, her parents came down to her to say thank you.

Victoria and I went our separate ways when we returned home. She still sends me Birthday and Christmas cards, but even if she didn't, I would still remember her. Solving that murder was the most amazing experience of my life, and after all of the murders I went on to solve after that, that one was special. It was a story of love and hate, and the most memorable thing of my life.

The Depressed Lady

Created from Booksie.com

Generated: 2013-05-20 12:41:06