

CONSTABLE. Yes, indeed, sir.

(He opens the hall door and calls:)

Elgin, come you in here, please.

(When the door opens, ELGIN is seen standing on the stairs listening. He starts to go up them guiltily but stops, turns and comes into the room. The CONSTABLE closes the door.)

INSPECTOR. Sit down, Elgin.

(ELGIN sits at the bridge table.)

Now, you started off for the pictures this evening but you came back. Why was that?

ELGIN. I've told you, sir, my wife wasn't feeling well.

INSPECTOR. It was you who let Mr. Costello into the house when he called here this evening?

ELGIN. Yes, sir.

INSPECTOR. Why didn't you tell us at once that it was Mr. Costello's car outside?

ELGIN. I didn't know, sir. Mr. Costello didn't drive up to the front door – I didn't know he'd come in a car.

INSPECTOR. Rather peculiar, eh?

ELGIN. Yes, sir. I expect he had his reasons.

INSPECTOR. Just what do you mean by that?

ELGIN. *(Smugly.)* Nothing, sir. Nothing at all.

INSPECTOR. *(Sharply.)* Ever seen Mr. Costello before?

ELGIN. Never, sir.

INSPECTOR. *(Meaningly.)* It wasn't because of Mr. Costello that you came back this evening?

ELGIN. I've told you, sir, my wife...

INSPECTOR. I don't want to hear any more about your wife. How long have you been with Mrs. Hailsham-Brown?

ELGIN. Six weeks, sir.

INSPECTOR. And before that?

ELGIN. *(Uneasily.)* I'd – I'd been having a little rest.

INSPECTOR. A rest? You realise that in a case like this, your references will have to be looked into very carefully.

(ELGIN half rises from his seat.)

ELGIN. Would that be...?

(He resumes his seat.)

I – I wouldn't wish to deceive you, sir. It wasn't anything really wrong – what I mean is – the original reference having got torn – I couldn't quite remember the wording...

INSPECTOR. So you wrote your own references – that's what it comes to.

ELGIN. I didn't mean any harm. I've got my living to earn...

INSPECTOR. *(Interrupting.)* At the moment, I'm not interested in fake references. I want to know what happened here tonight, and what you know about Mr. Costello.

ELGIN. I'd never set eyes on him before.

(He looks round at the hall door.)

But I've a good idea of why he came here.

INSPECTOR. Why?

ELGIN. Blackmail – he had something on *her*.

INSPECTOR. On Mrs. Hailsham-Brown?

ELGIN. *(Eagerly.)* Yes. I came in to ask if there was anything more, and I heard them.

INSPECTOR. What did you hear exactly?

ELGIN. *(Dramatically.)* I heard her say, "But that's blackmail. I'll not submit to it."

INSPECTOR. *(Doubtfully.)* Hm! Anything more?

ELGIN. No – they stopped when I came in – and when I went out they dropped their voices.

INSPECTOR. I see.

ELGIN. *(Whining.)* You'll not be hard on me, sir. I've had a lot of trouble one way and another.

INSPECTOR. Get out.

ELGIN. *(Quickly.)* Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

(ELGIN exits quickly to the hall.)