

there is to know. She is my ward and inexpressibly dear to me.

INSPECTOR. Yes, sir. I think that answer makes certain things very clear.

SIR ROWLAND. Does it, indeed?

INSPECTOR. Why did you change your plans this evening? Why did you come back here and pretend to play bridge?

SIR ROWLAND. (*Sharply.*) Pretend?

(*The INSPECTOR takes the playing card from his pocket.*)

INSPECTOR. This card was found on the other side of the room under the sofa. I can hardly believe that you would have played two rubbers of bridge and started a third with a pack of fifty-one cards, and the Ace of Spades missing.

(*SIR ROWLAND takes the card, looks at the back of it and then returns it.*)

SIR ROWLAND. Yes. Perhaps that is a little difficult to believe.

(*The INSPECTOR looks despairingly upwards.*)

INSPECTOR. I also think that three pairs of Mr. Hailsham-Brown's gloves need a certain amount of explanation.

(*SIR ROWLAND pauses a moment.*)

SIR ROWLAND. I'm afraid, Inspector, you won't get any explanation from me.

INSPECTOR. No, sir. I take it that you are out to do your best for a certain lady. But it's not a bit of good, sir. Truth will out.

SIR ROWLAND. I wonder.

INSPECTOR. Mrs. Hailsham-Brown knew that body was in the recess. Whether she dragged it there herself, or whether you helped her, I don't know. But she knew. Now, I suggest that Oliver Costello came here to see Mrs. Hailsham-Brown and to obtain money from her by threats.

SIR ROWLAND. Threats? Threats of what?

INSPECTOR. That will come out, no doubt. Mrs. Hailsham-Brown is young and attractive, gay. This Mr. Costello was attractive to the ladies, they say. Now Mrs. Hailsham-Brown is newly married and...

SIR ROWLAND. Stop! I must put you right on certain matters. You can confirm what I tell you easily enough. Henry Hailsham-Brown's first marriage was unfortunate. His wife was a beautiful woman, but unbalanced and neurotic. Her health and disposition had degenerated to such an alarming state that her little daughter had to be removed to a nursing home. Yes, a really shocking state of affairs. It seemed that she had become a drug addict. How she obtained these drugs was not found out, but it was a very fair guess that she had been supplied with them by this man, Oliver Costello. She was infatuated with him and finally ran away with him. Henry Hailsham-Brown allowed her to divorce him. He's old-fashioned in his views. He has now found happiness and peace in his marriage with Clarissa and I can assure you, Inspector, that there are no guilty secrets in Clarissa's life. There is nothing, I can swear, with which Costello could possibly threaten her. Don't you think, Inspector, that you're on the wrong tack altogether? Why should you be so certain it was a person Costello came here to see? Why couldn't it have been a place?

INSPECTOR. What do you mean, sir?

SIR ROWLAND. When you were talking to us about the late Mr. Sellon, you mentioned that the Narcotic Squad took an interest in him. Isn't there a possible link there? Drugs - Sellon - Sellon's house. Costello has been here once before, I understand, ostensibly to look at Sellon's antiques. Supposing Oliver Costello wanted something in this house. In that desk perhaps.

(*The INSPECTOR looks at the desk.*)

There is the curious incident of a man who came here and offered an exorbitant price for that desk.