Agatha Christie

THE MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT
Agatha Christie (1890-1976) is known throughout the world as the Queen of Crime. Her books have sold over a billion copies in English with another billion in over 100 foreign languages. She is the most widely published and translated author of all time and in any language; only the Bible and Shakespeare have sold more copies. She is the author of 80 crime novels and short story collections, 19 plays, and six other novels. The Mousetrap, her most famous play, was first staged in 1952 in London and is still performed there – it is the longest-running play in history.

Agatha Christie’s first novel was published in 1920. It featured Hercule Poirot, the Belgian detective who has become the most popular detective in crime fiction since Sherlock Holmes. Collins has published Agatha Christie since 1926.

This series has been especially created for readers worldwide whose first language is not English. Each story has been shortened, and the vocabulary and grammar simplified to make it accessible to readers with a good intermediate knowledge of the language.

The following features are included after the story:
A List of characters to help the reader identify who is who, and how they are connected to each other. Cultural notes to explain historical and other references. A Glossary of words that some readers may not be familiar with are explained. There is also a Recording of the story.
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The Man in the Brown Suit

Collins
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Chapter 1

Everybody has told me that I must write this story—and it is true that I was mixed up in the affair from the very beginning. Naturally there are gaps in my knowledge, but they can be filled by Sir Eustace Pedler's diary, which he has kindly asked me to use. So here goes: Anne Beddingfeld begins her adventures.

I have always wanted to have adventures. You see, my father, Professor Beddingfeld, was one of England's greatest experts on Primitive Man. His mind lived in Palaeolithic times, but the problem was that his body lived in the modern world. Papa did not care for modern man.

Unfortunately it is difficult to manage without modern men, such as butchers and bakers and greengrocers. Therefore, as Papa spent most of his time thinking about the past and Mamma had died when I was a baby, I had to deal with the practical side of life.

Papa enthusiastically ate what was put before him, but seemed troubled when the question of paying for it came up. And we never seemed to have any money. Papa was famous in the scientific world, and had many letters after his name, but this was not the type of fame that brought in cash.

There were times when I envied Emily, our servant girl. Emily’s boyfriends included a large sailor and several boys who worked in the local shops. She said she wanted to 'practise' with different young men—and I thought sadly that I had no one to 'practise' with! All Papa's friends were elderly professors with long beards. What I wanted was adventure, love and romance—and what I had was dullness and boredom.

There was a library in the village—I enjoyed reading the adventures and love affairs in these books, and I went to sleep
dreaming of strong, silent men who always ‘knocked down their opponent with a single punch’. There was the cinema too, with a weekly film ‘The Perils of Pamela’. Pamela was a marvellous young woman. Nothing worried her. She fell out of aeroplanes, adventured in submarines and climbed skyscrapers without a moment’s fear. She was not really clever – the Master Criminal caught her each time – but the hero always rescued her at the beginning of the following week. I used to come out full of a desire for adventure.

Most people have never heard of the ancient bones that were found at the Broken Hill Mine in Rhodesia. And yet, one morning, I found Papa full of excitement.

‘Do you understand, Anne? I have always said that the beginning of the human race was in Africa. They travelled . . .’

‘Don’t put marmalade on kippers, Papa,’ I said quickly, stopping my parent’s absent-minded hand. ‘Yes, you were saying?’

‘They travelled to Europe on . . .’

Here he choked badly on a mouthful of kipper bones. ‘We must go to Rhodesia at once,’ he said at last, standing up. ‘There will be so many discoveries. The primitive ox, I think, but not the woolly rhinoceros. You will write to the travel agent today.’

‘What about money, Papa?’

He looked at me in a disappointed way.

‘Your point of view always depresses me, my child. We must not let money stand in the way of scientific progress.’

‘I think the travel agent might require money, Papa.’

Papa looked upset. ‘My dear Anne, you will pay them in cash.’

‘I haven’t got any cash.’

Papa looked thoroughly irritated.
‘My child, I really cannot be bothered with these silly details. The bank – I had something yesterday, saying I had twenty-seven pounds.’

‘That’s your overdraft, I believe.’

‘Then you must write to my publishers.’

I agreed, although I was not confident. Papa’s books bring in more fame than money, though I loved the idea of going to Rhodesia.

‘Wait, Papa! You have different boots on,’ I called out. ‘Take off the brown one and put on the other black one. And don’t forget your scarf, Papa. It’s a very cold day.’

Papa left, correctly booted and warmly dressed. He returned late that evening, and I was concerned to see that his scarf and overcoat were missing.

‘Dear me, Anne, you are right. I took them off to go into the cave. One gets so dirty there.’

Our main reason for coming to live in Little Hampsley had been the Hampsley Cave. Papa spent most of his days working underground digging out the bones of prehistoric animals.

Papa coughed badly all evening, and the following morning I sent for the doctor. Poor Papa. It was pneumonia. He died four days later.
Chapter 2

Everyone was very kind to me. But it took me some time to realize that the thing I had always wanted — freedom — was mine at last. I was very poor, but free. At the same time I realized the kindness of all these people. The vicar did his best to persuade me that his wife needed someone to help her at home. Our tiny library decided to have an assistant librarian. Finally, the doctor suggested I should marry him. I was astonished. The doctor was almost forty, a round, fat little man.

‘It’s extremely kind of you,’ I said. ‘But I could never marry a man unless I loved him completely.’

He sighed. ‘But, my dear child, what will you do?’

‘Have adventures and see the world,’ I replied. ‘I’m going to London. If things happen anywhere, they’ll happen in London. I will look out for exciting opportunities and you’ll hear of me next in China or Timbuctoo.’

My next visitor was Mr Flemming, Papa’s London lawyer. He took my hands and spoke to me kindly.

‘My poor child. Your father was a very great man. But he was not good at business.’

I knew that better than Mr Flemming, but I had to listen politely while he told me that my father had only left me £87.

‘Well, well, my dear, we must see what can be done.’ He hesitated, and then said, ‘Would you like to come to stay with us for a time?’

London! The place for things to happen.

‘It’s very kind of you,’ I said. ‘While I’m looking for work. I must earn my living, you know?’

‘Yes, yes, my dear child. That is agreed then. My wife will be delighted to welcome you.’
I wonder if husbands know as much about their wives as they think they do.

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I was a little nervous of meeting Mrs Flemming. Mr Flemming was nervous too, I realized, as we went up the stairs of the tall house in a quiet Kensington square. Mrs Flemming greeted me pleasantly enough. A large, quiet woman, she took me up to a lovely bedroom, told me that tea would be ready in a quarter of an hour, and left me. I heard her voice raised as she entered the drawing-room below.

‘Well, Henry, why on earth . . .’ I could not hear the rest, but a few minutes later her voice was raised again and she was much more annoyed, ‘I agree! She is very good-looking.’

It is really a very hard life. Men will not be nice to you if you are not good-looking, and women will not be nice to you if you are.
Chapter 3

In the following weeks I did not make much progress at all. I had not found a job. Not that I really wanted one! I had the belief that if I went looking for adventure, adventure would meet me half-way. It is a theory of mine that was about to be proved true.

It was early in January – the 8th. I was returning from an interview and at Hyde Park Corner Tube Station I bought a ticket to Gloucester Road. There were not many people on the platform – but if there is one smell I cannot bear it is mothballs! One man’s overcoat stank of mothballs. And yet most men begin to wear their winter overcoats before January, and so the smell should have gone. The man seemed absorbed in his own thoughts. He was small, thin and had a very suntanned face.

'He has just come from abroad,' I decided. 'That's why his overcoat smells so.' At this moment the man turned. He glanced at me and then looked at something behind me and his face showed sudden panic. He took a step backwards – as though running from danger – forgetting that he was standing on the edge of the platform. He went down. There was a bright flash from the rails and a loud bang. I screamed.

People came running. Two men in railway uniforms seemed to appear from nowhere to take control. Part of me was horrified at the sudden disaster; another part was fascinated by the methods used for lifting the man off the electric rail and back on to the platform.

'Let me pass, please. I am a medical man.'

A tall, broad-shouldered man, wearing a dark overcoat and a formal hat, pressed past me. He had a brown beard and eyeglasses with gold frames. As he examined the body I had a strange feeling that what was happening was not real. Finally, the doctor stood upright and shook his head.
‘Dead. Nothing to be done.’
A worried porter raised his voice.
‘Now then, stand back, will you?’
I suddenly felt sick. I turned and walked towards the lift. I had to get out into the open air. The doctor was ahead of me, the lift was about to go up and he began to run. As he did so, he dropped a piece of paper. I picked it up and ran after him. But the lift gates shut in my face. I hoped it was nothing important he had lost – written on the notepaper was:

17.1.22 Kilnorden Castle

There was an unpleasant smell – mothballs again! The paper smelt strongly of them.

I walked home slowly – and did a good deal of thinking about how the doctor had examined the body.

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There was a brief article in the evening papers which said that a man had been killed in the Tube. Nothing had been found in the dead man’s pockets except instructions from a house-agent to view a house on the river near Marlow. It was in the name of L. B. Carton, Russell Hotel. There was uncertainty whether the cause of death was suicide or accident. That seemed to make my duty clear, and Mr Flemming agreed.

‘You should attend the inquest.’

At the inquest the hotel clerk identified the man as L. B. Carton of Kimberley, South Africa. He had arrived the day before and had, it seemed, come straight from the ship. I was the only person who had seen the death.
'You think it was an accident?' the coroner asked me.
'I am sure of it. Something alarmed him, and he stepped backwards without looking or thinking.'
'But what could have frightened him?'
'I don’t know. But he looked extremely shocked.'
The jury, obviously impatient to get home, decided that the event was an accident.
'It is extraordinary to me,' said the coroner, 'that the doctor who first examined the body has not come forward.'
I had my own theory about the doctor and intended to visit Scotland Yard, the police headquarters. But the next morning brought a surprise in the Daily Budget newspaper.

EXTRAORDINARY DEVELOPMENT
IN TUBE ACCIDENT

WOMAN FOUND STRANGLED
IN LONELY HOUSE

I read with interest.

'A terrible discovery was made yesterday at the Mill House, Marlow: The body of a beautiful young woman was discovered, strangled, in an upstairs room of the house. She is thought to be a foreigner, but so far has not been identified. The property, which is owned by Sir Eustace Pedler, is empty and advertised for rent. The house-agent’s instruction to view the Mill House was the only item found in the pockets of the man who died at Hyde Park Corner Tube Station. Sir Eustace Pedler is spending winter on the French Riviera.'
Chapter 4

The inquest on the strangled woman revealed the following facts. At one o’clock on January 8th, a well-dressed woman with a foreign accent had entered the offices of Butler and Park, house-agents, in Knightsbridge. She wanted to rent a house by the River Thames. She gave the name of Mrs de Castina and her address at the Ritz Hotel, but there was no one of that name staying there.

Mrs James, who is employed to look after the Mill House, explained that at three o’clock a lady came to see the house. She produced instructions from the house-agents and Mrs James gave her the keys.

A few minutes later a young man arrived. Mrs James described him as tall and broad-shouldered, with a suntanned face, light grey eyes, and clean-shaven, with no moustache or beard. He was wearing a brown suit. He explained that he was a friend of the lady but had gone to the post office to send a telegram. Mrs James directed him to the house.

Five minutes later he reappeared, handed back the keys and explained that the house was not right for them. Mrs James did not see the lady again. However, she noticed that the young man seemed very upset. ‘He looked like a man who had seen a ghost,’ she said.

The following day another lady and gentleman came to see the property and discovered the body of ‘Mrs de Castina’ – strangled with a thin black rope. The police surgeon believed the woman had been dead about twenty-four hours.

A verdict of ‘Murder’ was given, and the police (and the Daily Budget) were left to look for ‘the Man in the Brown Suit’ – who had murdered Mrs de Castina. These details were published by
the *Daily Budget* and every day the newspaper demanded: ‘Find the Man in the Brown Suit’. The accident in the Tube, however, was now seen as a *coincidence*, and forgotten. But I thought there was a connection between the two deaths. In each there was a man with a suntanned face – clearly an Englishman who had been living abroad – but I knew he wasn’t a doctor.

I had felt at the time that there was something wrong with the ‘doctor’s’ examination. I had worked in hospitals during the War and seen the professional way doctors dealt with bodies. A doctor does not feel for the heart on the right side of the body. But this ‘doctor’ would have been able to take anything he wanted from the pockets of the dead man. I had to go to Scotland Yard, to see whoever was in charge of the Mill House murder.

When I arrived I was introduced to *Detective Inspector* Meadows, a small man with red hair and a very irritating way of speaking.

‘Good morning. I understand you think you may be of use to us.’

His voice suggested that such a thing was unlikely. I began to get angry.

‘You know about the man who was killed in the Tube? The man who had an instruction to view the Mill House at Marlow.’

‘Ah!’ said the inspector. ‘You are the Miss Beddingfeld who gave evidence at the inquest. Certainly the man had instructions in his pocket. A lot of other people may have had, too.’

I continued. ‘You didn’t think it was unusual that this man had no ticket?’

‘Easiest thing to drop your ticket. I’ve done it myself,’ Meadows claimed.

‘And no money.’
‘Some men don’t carry a wallet,’ he replied.
I tried again. ‘You don’t think it’s unusual that the doctor never came forward afterwards?’
‘A busy medical man often doesn’t read the papers. He probably forgot all about the accident.’
‘In fact, inspector, you are determined to find nothing unusual,’ I answered.
‘Well, I think you are too fond of the word, Miss Beddingfeld. Young ladies are romantic, I know – fond of mysteries and that kind of thing. But I’m a busy man –’
I decided the inspector was useless.
Chapter 5

I walked straight to the house of Lord Nasby, who is the millionaire owner of the *Daily Budget*. While staying with Mr and Mrs Flemming, I had been able to get a calling card bearing the name of Lord Loamsley, a friend of theirs. I now wrote a note on this: 'Please give Miss Beddingfeld a few moments of your time.'

It worked. A servant took the card away and soon a secretary appeared and asked me to follow him. As I entered a large room, a frightened-looking typist ran past me. Then I was face to face with Lord Nasby. A big man. Big head. Big moustache. Big stomach. But I had not come here to comment on Lord Nasby's stomach. He was already shouting at me.

'Well, what does Loamsley want?'

'To begin with,' I said, 'I don't know Lord Loamsley. I took his card from the house of the people I'm staying with, and I wrote those words on it myself. It was important that I should see you.'

For a moment I thought Lord Nasby might explode with anger. But he calmed himself.

'I admire your coolness. Well, you see me! If you interest me, you will continue to see me for exactly two minutes longer.'

'That will be long enough,' I replied. 'It's the Mill House Mystery.'

I stated the facts of the Tube accident and my conclusions. When I had finished he said unexpectedly,

'Well, you seem to be a very clever young woman. But it's not enough evidence.'

'I'm aware of that. I want a job on your newspaper to investigate.'
‘Can’t do that. We’ve got our own special man on it.’
‘And I’ve got my own special knowledge, Lord Nasby.’
‘Oh, have you? Well, what is it?’
‘This ‘doctor’ dropped a piece of paper. It smelt of mothballs. So did the dead man, but the doctor didn’t. The doctor must have taken it from the body. It had two words on it and some numbers.’
‘Let’s see it.’ Lord Nasby stretched out his hand casually.
‘I think not,’ I said, smiling.
‘You are a bright girl. Sensible to **hang on to** it. You were not worried about handing it to the police?’
‘I went to Scotland Yard to hand it in this morning. But the inspector annoyed me.’
‘Foolish man. Well, my dear girl, if you get anything that can be published, you will have your chance.’
Chapter 6

I went home delighted. Once in my room, I studied my precious piece of paper. Here was the clue to the mystery. To begin with, what did the figures represent? There were five of them, and a dot after the first two. ‘1 7 . 1 22’ That did not seem to lead to anything. I studied the words. Kilmorden Castle. I had to get to Kilmorden Castle as quickly as possible. I left my room, and returned with a pile of reference books from the Flemmings’ library. I searched with growing annoyance. Finally, I shut the last book with a bang. I could find no such place as Kilmorden Castle. Why should anyone invent a name like that? It was very strange! I sat back miserably and wondered what else I could do? Then I jumped up. Of course! I must visit the ‘scene of the crime’. I must go to Marlow. I would visit the house and pretend that I wanted to rent it.

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The Mill House had its own lodge, a small house standing guard at its gates. In answer to my knock, the door of the lodge opened quickly and a tall, middle-aged woman rushed out.

‘Nobody can go into the house, do you hear? I’m sick of you reporters. Sir Eustace’s orders are . . .’

‘I understood the house was available to rent,’ I said coldly. ‘Of course, if it’s already taken . . .’

‘Oh, I beg your pardon, miss. I’ve been so bothered by newspaper people. No, the house isn’t rented – nor likely to be now.’

‘Has there been a fire?’ I asked in an anxious whisper.

‘Oh, Lord, nothing like that, miss! But surely you’ve heard about that foreign lady who was murdered here?’
'I did read something about it in the papers,' I said carelessly which brought a fierce reaction.

'I'm sure you did, miss! It's been in all the newspapers. The *Daily Budget* wants to catch the man who did it. Well I hope they get him — although a nice looking man he was. He looked like a soldier. Ah, well, perhaps she treated him badly. Though she was a very good-looking woman.'

'Did she seem upset at all?' I asked.

'Not a bit. She was smiling to herself. And then she was murdered. I shall never forget it. Why, I wouldn't even stay here if Sir Eustace hadn't begged me.'

'I thought Sir Eustace Pedler was at the French Riviera?'

'So he was, miss. He came back to England when he heard the news, and his secretary, Mr Pagett, offered me double pay to stay on. That young man now,' said Mrs James, returning suddenly to an earlier point in the conversation. 'He was a bit excited. His eyes, I noticed them especially, were all shining. But I never thought of anything being wrong. Not even when he came out again looking so upset.'

He was upset.

'How long was he in the house?'

'Oh, not long, five minutes maybe.'

'How tall was he, do you think? About six foot?'

'I should say so.'

'He was clean-shaven, you say?'

'Yes, miss.'

'Was his chin at all shiny?' I asked suddenly.

Mrs James was astonished. 'Well, miss, it was. However did you know?'

'It's a strange thing, but murderers often have shiny chins,' I explained wildly. But Mrs James did not doubt me. 'Really, now, miss. I never heard that before. I'll fetch you the keys.'
I accepted them, and went on to the Mill House. From the beginning I had realized that the differences between the man Mrs James had described and my Tube 'doctor' were not important. An overcoat, a beard, eye-glasses with gold frames. The 'doctor' had appeared middle-aged, but he had bent over the body like a young man. I believed that the Moth Ball man and Mrs de Castina intended to meet at the Mill House. And I was sure that when the Moth Ball man suddenly saw the 'doctor', it was totally unexpected and alarming to him. What had happened next? The 'doctor' had quickly removed his disguise and followed the woman to Marlow. But in his hurry to remove the false beard he had left glue on his chin. This explained my question to Mrs James.
Chapter 7

I found the room where the murder had happened. It was square with two big windows, plain white walls and a bare floor. There was nothing in it. At each window there was a window-seat with a cupboard under it. The first was empty. But when I put my hand into the opposite cupboard, I found a roll of Kodak film! I smelled it suspiciously — mothballs again! The film had been carried in the pocket of the man who was killed in the Tube. The ‘doctor’ had taken the film — and he had dropped it here. I had a clue!

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On the way back to town, I studied the paper again. Suddenly the numbers took on a new meaning. Could they be a date? 17.1 22. The 17th of January, 1922. But in that case I must find Kilmorden Castle, because today was the 14th.

I took my precious roll to the big Kodak shop on Regent Street, and asked for prints.

‘You’ve given me the wrong roll,’ the man said, smiling.

‘This is an unused film.’

I walked out with as much pride as I could. I expect it is good for me, now and again, to realize what an idiot I can be! But nobody enjoys it. And then, as I was passing one of the big shipping offices, I stopped. In the window was a beautiful model of one of the company’s boats, and it was labelled ‘Kenilworth Castle’. A wild idea ran through my brain. I went in and asked with a shaking voice,

‘Kilmorden Castle?’

‘On the 17th from Southampton. Cape Town? First or second class?’
‘How much is it?’
‘First class, eighty-seven pounds . . .’
I interrupted him. This was exactly the amount of money left to me by Papa!
‘First class,’ I said.
Chapter 8

Extracts from the diary of Sir Eustace Pedler, MP

It is an extraordinary thing that I never seem to get any peace. I am a man who likes a quiet life. I like England in the summer, and the Riviera in the winter. My desire in life is to be thoroughly comfortable. But despite myself, I become involved. I hate being involved.

All this because Guy Pagett came into my bedroom this morning with a telegram, looking extremely upset. Guy Pagett is my secretary, a hardworking, admirable man. No one annoys me more. For a long time I have been wondering how to get rid of him. But you cannot dismiss a secretary because he prefers work to play, likes getting up early in the morning, and has no bad habits. I wouldn’t mind, if Pagett didn’t make me work, too. The only amusing thing about the fellow is his face. He has the face of a fourteenth-century poisoner — the sort of man a king might send out to murder his enemies.

Last week I had the brilliant idea of sending him to Florence. He had talked about Florence and how much he wanted to go there.

‘My dear fellow,’ I cried, ‘You will go tomorrow. I will pay all your expenses.’

It seemed a small price to pay for a week of freedom. It has been a wonderful week. But when I opened my eyes and saw Pagett standing between me and the light, at the terrible hour of nine this morning, I realized that freedom was over.

‘My dear fellow,’ I said, ‘has the funeral already taken place?’ Pagett does not approve of humour.

‘So you know, Sir Eustace?’
'Know what?' I said crossly. 'From your expression I thought one of your relatives must have died.'

Pagett held up the telegram. 'It's a telegram from the police at Marlow. A woman has been murdered in your house.'

'How rude!' I exclaimed. 'Why in my house? Who murdered her?'

'They don't say. I suppose we will go back to England at once, Sir Eustace?'

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It is incredible that anyone who can get away from England in winter does not do so! It is a horrible climate.

Several very surprising things have occurred. To begin with, I met Augustus Milray, who is a perfect example of the kind of fool produced by the present government. He took me into a quiet corner, speaking in a way that suggested dark, important secrets. He talked for a long time about South Africa and the industrial situation there. About rumours of unrest and trouble so bad that the workers in the diamond mines might dare to lay down their tools and stop work. Finally, his voice a whisper, he explained that documents had been found which must be placed in the hands of General Smuts, the Prime Minister of South Africa.

'Drop them in the nearest letter-box, then.' I said cheerfully.

He seemed shocked.

'My dear Pedler! This is a time for great care.' He shook his head. 'Is it true that you intend to visit South Africa soon? You have substantial businesses in Rhodesia, I know.'

'Well, I had thought of going in about a month.'

'Could you possibly make it sooner? You would be doing the government a very great service.'
’Well,’ I said slowly, ’I am anxious to leave England again.’
’I am very grateful to you, Pedler. I will send the package to you. To be placed in General Smuts’s own hands, you understand? The Kilmorden Castle sails on Saturday.’

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It was the following evening that Jarvis, my butler, informed me that a gentleman wished to see me.
’The gentleman asked me to tell you that he comes from Mr Milray.’
My visitor was a well-built young fellow with a suntan and a scar from the corner of his eye to the jaw.
’Sir Eustace. Mr Milray wishes me to go with you to South Africa as a second secretary.’
He was a young man who would not take no for an answer.
’You will say nothing to anyone about this.’
’Very well,’ I said weakly. I was getting into trouble, just when I thought I was at peace!
’And what is my new secretary’s name?’ I asked.
He thought for a minute.
’Harry Rayburn seems suitable,’ he said.
Chapter 9

Anne's Story

It is not dignified to be sea-sick. I am sorry to say that as soon as the Kilmorden began to move up and down on the sea, I turned pale and went downstairs to my cabin. I remained there for three days, feeling ill. I was a totally different Anne to the one who had rushed back with great excitement from the shipping office a few days earlier.

Mrs Flemming had spoken to me as soon as I entered the drawing-room.

‘Anne, my dear, Miss Emery is leaving me.’ Miss Emery was the children’s tutor. ‘It would be so nice if you took her place.’

I was so pleased. I knew she didn’t want me. It was kindness that made her offer. I put my arms around her. ‘You are very kind,’ I said. ‘Thank you but I’m going to South Africa on Saturday.’

As I left that morning, she gave me an envelope. Inside I found five new five-pound notes and the words: ‘I hope you will not be offended and will accept this with my love.’ She was a very good, kind woman.

So here I was, with twenty-five pounds in my pocket, chasing my adventure. But it was only on the fourth day that the stewardess finally persuaded me to go up on deck. Wrapped in blankets, and feeling weak and tired, I was helped up and put in a deck-chair. People passed me: couples exercising, children running, young people laughing. A few other people, suffering like me, lay pale-faced in deck-chairs. The air was cold and fresh and the sun was shining brightly. I felt a little happier.

I began to watch the people. One woman in particular attracted me. She was about thirty, of medium height and very
fair, with a round, happy face and blue eyes. In a pleasant but confident way, she seemed to own the ship! Deck stewards ran about obeying her commands. She appeared to be one of those rare people who know what they want, make sure that they get it, and manage to do so without being offensive. I decided that if ever I recovered, it would amuse me to talk to her.

We reached Madeira about midday and the local people came on board to see what they could sell to the passengers. I picked up a large bunch of flowers and smelt it. I felt much better after that. When my stewardess brought chicken soup, I enjoyed eating it.

The attractive woman I had seen earlier had been off to look around the town. She came back accompanied by a tall, soldierly-looking man with dark hair and a suntanned face. I had noticed him earlier in the day. A strong, silent man, I thought. He was about forty, with slightly greying hair, and was easily the best-looking man on board. I asked my stewardess if she knew who the attractive woman was.

‘That’s Mrs Blair. You must have read about her in the papers.’

I nodded. Mrs Blair was very well known as one of the most fashionable women of the day.

The following morning, to my surprise, after walking a few times round the deck with her companion, Mrs Blair stopped by my chair.

‘Feeling better this morning?’

I thanked her, and said I felt slightly more like a human being.

‘You did look ill yesterday. Colonel Race and I decided that we would have the excitement of a funeral at sea – but you’ve disappointed us.’

I laughed. ‘Being in the air has done me good.’

‘Nothing like fresh air,’ said Colonel Race, smiling.
‘Being shut in those hot cabins would kill anyone,’ declared Mrs Blair. Sitting by my side she dismissed her friend with a nod. ‘You’ve got an outside cabin with a sea view, I hope?’ I shook my head.

‘My dear girl! Why don’t you change? There’s plenty of room. A lot of people left the ship at Madeira. Talk to the ship’s purser about it at lunch time, he’s responsible for that kind of thing.’

At the thought of lunch I shuddered. ‘I couldn’t move.’

‘Don’t be silly. Come and walk with me.’ I felt very weak on my legs at first, but as we walked I began to feel brighter and better. Colonel Race joined us again. ‘You can see the Mountain of Tenerife from the other side of the deck,’ he told us.

‘Can I get a photograph of it, do you think?’ asked Mrs Blair. ‘No – but that won’t stop you trying.’ Mrs Blair laughed.

We went round to the other side of the deck. There, white and snowy in a rose-coloured mist, was the beautiful mountain peak. Mrs Blair ran for her camera and began energetically taking photographs.

‘There, that’s the film finished. But I’ve got another.’ She produced it in triumph from her bag. A sudden roll of the boat upset her balance and, as she reached for the rail, the film went over the side.

‘Oh!’ cried Mrs Blair, laughing. She leaned over. ‘Do you think it has gone overboard?’

‘No,’ said Colonel Race, ‘but you may have hit an unlucky steward on the deck below.’ The bell for lunch was rung.

‘Lunch, Miss Beddingfeld,’ declared Mrs Blair.
‘Well,’ I said. ‘I do feel rather hungry.’

‘Splendid! You’re sitting at the purser’s table. Ask him about the cabin.’

I began with a little food and finished by eating an enormous meal. The purser congratulated me on my recovery. Everyone was changing cabins today, he told me, and promised that my things would be moved without delay.

There were only four at our table. Myself, a couple of elderly ladies, and a person working in Christian churches abroad – the Reverend Edward Chichester. I looked round at the other tables. Mrs Blair was sitting at the Captain’s table. Colonel Race next to her. On the other side of the captain was a successful looking, grey-haired man. And there was a man I had not seen before. He was tall and dark – and looked so cruel that I was startled. I asked the purser who he was.

‘Oh, that’s one of Sir Eustace Pedler’s secretaries. He’s been very sea-sick. Sir Eustace has two secretaries with him, and the sea has made them both ill. This man’s name is Pagett.’

So, Sir Eustace Pedler, the owner of the Mill House, was on board.

‘That’s Sir Eustace,’ the purser continued, ‘sitting next to the captain.’ The more I studied Pagett’s smooth, bloodless face, the less I liked it. With those secretive eyes and that strangely flat head – it all gave me an unpleasant and alarming feeling.

★ ★ ★

Later on, when I went down to my cabin to see if my removal was in progress, I found my steward busy working at it.


‘Oh, no!’ I cried. ‘Not Number 13.’
Number 13 is my one superstition. Almost in tears I asked the steward, ‘Is there any other cabin I can have?’

‘Well, there is Number 17. It was given to someone – but his bags are not in yet so I am sure he won’t mind.’

He left to speak to the purser and returned smiling. ‘That’s all right, miss.’

Number 17 was not quite as large as Number 13, but I was very satisfied. At that moment the man with the cruel face appeared.

‘Excuse me,’ he said, ‘but this is Sir Eustace Pedler’s cabin.’

‘We have given Sir Eustace Number 13,’ explained the steward.

‘No, he is to have Number 17.’

‘Number 13 is a better cabin, sir – larger.’

‘I must tell you that Sir Eustace has chosen Number 17 as being suitable for his needs. And the purser said I could have it.’

‘I’m sorry,’ I said coldly, ‘but Number 17 has been given to me.’

‘I cannot agree to that,’ Mr Pagett replied.

‘Steward, put my things in here,’ demanded a new voice.

‘This is my cabin.’

It was my neighbour at lunch, the Reverend Edward Chichester.

‘This is my cabin,’ I said.

‘It is Sir Eustace Pedler’s cabin,’ said Mr Pagett.

We were all getting rather angry.

‘I am sorry to have to argue,’ said Chichester with a smile that did not hide his determination to get what he wanted.

‘You are going to have Number 28,’ said the steward. ‘A very good cabin, sir.’

‘I insist, Number 17 was promised to me.’
I was not giving in. I disliked Chichester. He had false teeth that made a noise when he ate. Many men have been hated for less. We all said the same things again and again. And none of us would give in. However, there are no people in the world who are as nice to women as sailors. My friend the purser marched in and told everyone that Number 17 was my cabin. What a hero!

This victory made me feel much better. The sea was smooth, the weather was getting warmer. My sea-sickness was gone! I went up and enjoyed the deck sports with some pleasant young men who were extremely nice to me. Tea was served and I ate hungrily. Life was delightful.

Dinner was announced and as I hurried to Cabin 17, I wondered what made so many people anxious to get it. And suddenly I thought of that number on the piece of paper I had found — 17. 1 22. I had thought it was the date the Kilmorden Castle sailed from Southampton. What if I was wrong? Perhaps ‘17’ meant Cabin 17? and ‘1’? The time — one o’clock. Then ‘22’ must be the date. Tomorrow was the 22nd!
Chapter 10

The hours that followed seemed the longest I had ever known. I went to bed, but wore a thick dressing-gown so I could jump up and take an active part in anything that happened. My heart beat quickly with excitement. One o’clock! And nothing. Wait — what was that? Feet running along the corridor. Then my cabin door opened suddenly and a man almost fell inside.

‘Save me,’ he said breathlessly. ‘They are hunting me.’

A cabin does not have many hiding-places for a six-foot man. But it was not a moment for argument. I could hear footsteps outside. I pointed — and he slipped down under the bed. As he disappeared, I pulled down the folding washbasin. A lady who was about to wash her face could not possibly be hiding a man she had never met before.

There was a knock at the door, and before I could say, ‘Come in’, it was pushed open. I think I expected it to be Mr Pagett or the Reverend Chichester with a gun. I did not expect a respectable night stewardess with a concerned face.

‘Sorry, miss, I thought you called out.’

‘No, I did not.’

‘I apologize for interrupting, but there is a man wandering about who is drunk and we are afraid he might get into one of the ladies’ cabins and frighten them.’

‘How terrible!’ I said, looking worried. ‘He won’t come in here, will he?’

‘Oh, I don’t think so, miss. Ring the bell if he does. Good night.’

‘Good night.’

Drunk! So that was the explanation.

‘Come out immediately,’ I demanded.
There was no answer. I looked under the bed. My visitor seemed to be asleep.

‘Very drunk!’ I thought.

Then I saw something frightening – blood on the floor.

Using all my strength, I pulled the man out. He had been stabbed in the left shoulder, there was a large cut made by a knife. I took his coat off and began to work. At the shock of the cold water his head moved, then he sat up.

‘Stay still, please.’ I told him.

He pulled himself up and stood, unsteady on his feet. ‘I don’t need anything.’

He was angry, refusing my help without any thanks!

‘That is a deep cut. You must let me bandage it.’

‘No.’

Now I became angry. ‘I do not like your manners,’ I said coldly.

‘Then I will leave.’

He moved towards the door, but almost fell. I pushed him down on the sofa.

‘Don’t be a fool. Do you want to bleed all over the ship?’

He finally listened to me and sat quietly as I bandaged the wound. ‘There,’ I said, ‘Now will you tell me what happened?’

‘I will not.’

‘Why not?’ I said.

He answered angrily. ‘If you want to tell everyone, tell a woman. Otherwise keep your mouth shut.’

‘How dare you!’ I cried.

He got up and we faced each other like wild animals. For the first time, I noticed the details of his appearance, the short dark hair, the strong jaw, the scar on the brown cheek, the light grey
eyes that looked into mine in a way that was wild and dangerous and very hard to describe. I could not look away.

‘You have not thanked me yet for saving your life!’ I said softly.

That hit him hard. I knew it would. Somehow I knew that he would hate, more than anything else, to be reminded he owed his life to me. I didn’t care. I wanted to hurt him. I had never wanted to hurt anyone so much.

‘I wish you had not saved me!’ he shouted. ‘I would be better dead.’

‘You cannot avoid the debt,’ I said. ‘I saved your life and I’m waiting for you to say “Thank you.”’

If looks could kill, I think he would have killed me then. He pushed past me. At the door he turned. ‘I accept the debt. One day I will pay it.’

He was gone, leaving me with my heart beating so very fast.
Chapter 11

I got up late the next morning. Mrs Blair called me as I came on deck.

'Good morning, gipsy girl. Sit down here next to me.'

'Why do you call me that?' I asked, as I sat down.

'It suits you. It's the gipsy in you that makes you so different. I decided from the beginning that you and Colonel Race were the two most interesting people on the ship.'

'That's funny,' I said, 'I thought the same about you — only that is much easier to understand.'

Mrs Blair laughed — and I knew we would get on well together.

'Tell me about yourself, Anne. Why are you going to South Africa?'

I told her about Papa's work.

'So you are Charles Beddingfeld's daughter? I knew you were more than a simple country girl! Are you going to Broken Hill to dig up more bones?'

'I may,' I said carefully. 'I've got other plans as well.'

'What a mysterious girl you are. But you look tired this morning. Did you not sleep well?' She yawned. 'A fool of a steward woke me in the middle of the night to return that film I dropped yesterday. He did it in the most silly way. He put his arm through the air ventilator and dropped it on me. I thought it was a bomb for a moment!'

'Here is your colonel,' I said, as Colonel Race appeared on the deck.

'He's not my colonel. In fact he admires you very much. So don't run off.'
‘I need something from my cabin,’ I said and left quietly.

For some reason I was a little afraid of Colonel Race. I went down to my cabin to find something to stop the wind blowing my hair about. But as soon as I opened my drawer, I knew it had been searched. I sat down, my head full of questions. Since the previous night, I had been wondering who the young man in my cabin was, and who had stabbed him. And now this. Who had done it? What were they looking for? Why should Cabin Number 17 be so important?

I counted the people I thought I should watch. Sir Eustace Pedler. Mr Pagett, the cruel-looking secretary. And a conversation with Mr Chichester would be a good idea, I decided.

Tying a scarf round my hair, I went up on deck again, determined to look for answers. I was in luck. Mr Chichester was leaning against the rail, drinking tea.

‘I hope you have forgiven me about Cabin 17,’ I said with my best smile.

‘I believe in forgiveness,’ said Mr Chichester coldly.

‘Is this your first visit to South Africa?’ I asked.

‘Yes. But I have worked for the last two years amongst the cannibals in East Africa.’

‘Man-eaters! How exciting! How did you escape?’

‘Escape?’

‘From being eaten, I mean?’

Mr Chichester was not amused. But if he had spent the last two years in Africa, why was he not suntanned? His skin was as pink as a baby’s.

After lunch I found Sir Eustace and Pagett having coffee with Mrs Blair and Colonel Race. Mrs Blair welcomed me with a smile, so I joined them.
‘But I love the Italians,’ Mrs Blair was saying. ‘They’re so helpful. You ask for directions and they take you kindly by the arm and walk all the way there with you.’

‘Was that your experience in Florence, Pagett?’ asked Sir Eustace, with a smile.

His secretary’s face became pink and he had difficulty speaking. ‘Oh – yes – yes.’

With a quick excuse, he got up and left.

‘I am beginning to believe Pagett has committed some secret crime in Florence,’ remarked Sir Eustace. ‘Whenever Italy is mentioned, he changes the subject or runs off.’

‘Perhaps he murdered someone,’ said Mrs Blair. ‘I hope I am not hurting your feelings, Sir Eustace, but he does look like a murderer.’

‘Yes! It is amusing, when you think of how very respectable the poor man is.’
Chapter 12

Extract from the diary of Sir Eustace Pedler.

After we left Madeira, Guy Pagett would not stop talking about work. It is true I promised my publishers my ‘Memories’ in the summer, but who wants to work on a ship? And Pagett is too honest for the job. He won’t let me invent stories about people I have not met.

The next thing I knew he was trying to get an extra cabin.

‘There’s no room to work in your cabin, Sir Eustace. It’s full of luggage. And we could hardly work in my little hole.’

I know Pagett’s ‘little holes’ – he usually has the best cabin on the ship.

The answer seemed simple, ‘Get an extra cabin,’ I said.

But Pagett loves to make mysteries. He came to me the next day, very pleased to have troubles to share. ‘You know you told me to get Cabin 17 for an office? I tell you, Sir Eustace, there is something very odd about that cabin.’

He and a Mr Chichester, and a girl called Beddingfeld, had almost had a fight over the cabin. Needless to say, the girl had won, and Pagett was annoyed.

‘Both Number 13 and 28 are better cabins,’ he repeated. ‘But they would not look at them.’

‘Well,’ I said, trying not to yawn, ‘nor would you.’

He was not happy to hear that.

‘You told me to get Cabin 17.’

‘My dear fellow,’ I said rather sharply, ‘I mentioned Number 17 because I happened to notice it was empty. I did not mean you to fight to the death for it – Number 13 or 28 would have been just as suitable.'
He looked hurt. ‘There is something more. Miss Beddingfeld got the cabin, but this morning I saw Chichester coming out of it.’

I looked at him severely. ‘If you are trying to start an ugly story about Chichester, who is a Reverend — though an unpleasant person — and that attractive girl, Anne Beddingfeld, I don’t believe a word of it,’ I said coldly. ‘Anne Beddingfeld is an extremely nice girl — with particularly good legs. In fact, she’s got the best legs on board.’

Pagett did not like me talking about Anne Beddingfeld’s legs. He never notices legs and thinks my enjoyment of such things is childish. I like annoying Pagett, so I continued happily, ‘Ask her to dine at our table tomorrow night. It’s the Fancy Dress dance. We’ll have the Captain, the girl with the nice legs, Mrs Blair . . .’

‘You won’t get Mrs Blair, without Colonel Race,’ Pagett interrupted. ‘He’s asked her to dine with him.’

Pagett always knows everything. I was most annoyed. ‘Who is Race?’ I demanded.

As I said before, Pagett always knows everything — or thinks he does. He looked mysterious again. ‘They say he works for the British Government — in the Secret Service, Sir Eustace. Rather an important man, too.’

‘Isn’t that like the Government?’ I cried out. ‘Here’s a man on board who works with secrets, and they give them to me, a peaceful outsider who only asks to be left alone.’
At the Fancy Dress dance I had great fun dressed as a teddy bear — and won first prize! Anne Beddingfeld had dressed as a gipsy and looked extremely attractive. I danced twice with Anne, once with Mrs Blair and various other pretty girls.

Then we went to supper. I ordered champagne and this made the usually silent Colonel Race talk in a very relaxed way. This amused me, until I saw that Colonel Race, and not myself, was getting all the attention.

‘You must have had a very interesting life, Colonel Race?’ said Miss Beddingfeld, looking at him with wide eyes. That was enough – Race began to tell lion stories. A man who has shot lions in large quantities has an unfair advantage over other men. It seemed to me that it was time I, too, told a lion story.

‘That reminds me of an exciting story I heard. A friend of mine was out on a shooting trip in East Africa. One night he came out of his tent and was surprised by a growl. He turned and saw a lion about to jump. He dropped to his knees, and the lion jumped right over him. Annoyed at having missed him, the animal growled and prepared to jump again. Again my friend dropped down, and again the lion jumped over him. This happened a third time, but by now he was close to his tent, and he ran in to get his gun. When he came out, gun in hand, the lion had disappeared. Surprised, he went carefully round to the back of the tent. There, sure enough, was the lion, busily practising low jumps.’

This was received with great delight and a lot of laughter.

‘I must go to Rhodesia,’ said Mrs Blair as I drank champagne. ‘After your stories, Colonel Race, I simply must. It’s a terrible journey though, five days from Cape Town in the train.’
The Man in the Brown Suit

‘Please be my guest,’ I said. ‘I have a private railway carriage joining the train, which will be more comfortable.’

‘Oh, Sir Eustace, how kind of you! Only a week and we arrive in South Africa,’

‘Ah, South Africa,’ I said happily. I drank more champagne. ‘South Africa with her gold mines and her diamonds . . .’

‘Diamonds!’ said Mrs Blair, delighted.

‘Diamonds!’ said Miss Beddingfeld. ‘I suppose you have been to Kimberley and seen the mines, Colonel Race?’

Lots of questions followed. What were mines like? Was it true that the native workers were kept inside fences in special huts that were really the same thing as prisons? Race showed a good knowledge of his subject. He described where the native people lived and how they were searched for diamonds, and the safety measures used by the great diamond company, De Beers.

‘Then it’s impossible to steal the diamonds?’ asked Mrs Blair with much disappointment.

‘Nothing is impossible, Mrs Blair. ‘It happened once, just before the War. You must remember it, Pedler. You were in South Africa at the time?’

I nodded.

‘Oh do tell us,’ cried Miss Beddingfeld.

Race smiled. ‘I suppose you have heard of Sir Laurence Eardsley, who made a fortune from South African gold mines. He comes into the story because of his son. You may remember that before the War there were rumours that diamonds had been discovered in British Guiana. A discovery as large as the one at Kimberley. Two young explorers returned from that part of South America, bringing with them an impressive collection of diamonds. These two young men, John Eardsley and his friend Harry Lucas, came to Kimberley so their diamonds could be
inspected. At the same time a robbery took place at De Beers that was hard to believe. Let me explain. When diamonds are sent to England, they are made up into packets. These are locked in a safe – two keys are kept by two different men and a third man knows the combination number needed to open the safe. The packets are handed by De Beers to their bank and the bank sends them to England. Each package is worth £100,000. On this occasion the bank thought there was something unusual about one of the packets. It was opened, and lumps of sugar were found inside!

'I don’t know exactly how they came to believe the thief was John Eardsley. Some people remembered that he had been very wild at Cambridge and that his father had paid his debts more than once. Anyway, the story soon spread that the discovery of South American diamonds had been a lie. John Eardsley was arrested, and some of the De Beers diamonds were found in his possession. But his father, Sir Laurence Eardsley, paid De Beers for the missing diamonds and the case never came to court. How the robbery was committed has never been known.'

'As for the two friends, they joined the army, fought bravely in the War. John was killed and young Lucas was reported missing – believed killed. Sir Laurence died about a month ago and his fortune passed to his closest relative.'

The Colonel paused and, as questions came quickly, something caught Miss Beddingfeld’s attention. She turned in her chair. At the sound she made, I, too, turned. There was Rayburn, standing in the doorway, his face showing every sign of shock. Evidently Race’s story had affected him very much.

Suddenly he saw that we were watching him – and left immediately.

'Who is that?’ asked Anne Beddingfeld.
‘My other secretary,’ I explained. ‘Mr Rayburn. He’s been sea-sick up to now.’

‘How long has he been your secretary?’ she asked.

‘I employed him just before I sailed. An old friend suggested him.’

She said nothing, but sat in thoughtful silence. I turned to Race with a particular interest in his story.

‘Who is Sir Laurence’s closest relative, Race? Do you know?’

‘I am!’ he replied with a smile.
Chapter 14

Anne’s Story

I decided the time had come to share my story. I sat on my bed, still in my party dress, and thought about Mrs Blair. I liked her. She had been kind to me — and I knew my story would interest her. She would not be in bed yet and the night stewardess would know her cabin. I rang the bell. After some delay it was answered, by a man. Mrs Blair’s cabin was Number 71.

‘Where is the night stewardess, then?’ I asked.
‘There is no stewardess working at night, miss.’
‘But a stewardess came the other night — about one o’clock.’
‘You must have been dreaming, miss. There’s no stewardess after ten.’

So who had come to my cabin on the night of the 22nd? I was certainly dealing with well organized people.

I left my cabin and knocked at Mrs Blair’s door.
‘Who’s that?’
‘It’s me — Anne Beddingfeld.’
‘Oh, come in, gipsy girl.’

I entered. Mrs Blair was wearing a lovely Japanese silk robe — all orange, gold and black.

‘Mrs Blair,’ I said quickly, ‘I want to tell you my story — that is, if it isn’t too late.’

‘Not a bit. I always hate going to bed.’ She smiled in that delightful way of hers. ‘I would love to hear your story. You are a most unusual creature, Anne. Sit down next to me and begin.’

I told her the whole story — from Papa dying, to the death in the Tube station, the murder at Sir Eustace Pedler’s house and ‘the Man in the Brown Suit’ — and now my adventures on the
boat. She gave a deep sigh when I had finished, but she did not say at all what I expected.

'Anne, haven't you ever had doubts?'
'Doubts?' I asked, confused.

'Yes, doubts! Starting off alone with almost no money. What will you do in a strange country with all your money gone?'

'It's no good worrying about that until it happens. I've still got most of the twenty-five pounds Mrs Flemming gave me, and I won the ship's lottery yesterday. That's another fifteen pounds. Why, I have lots of money. Forty pounds!'

'Lots of money! My goodness!' said Mrs Blair. 'I could not do it, Anne, and I have plenty of strength. I could not start off with a few pounds and no idea where I was going.'

'But that's the fun of it,' I cried, excitedly. 'It gives me such a grand feeling of adventure.'

Then she smiled. 'Lucky Anne! There are not many people who feel as you do.'

I could not wait any longer. 'Well, what do you think of it all, Mrs Blair?'

'I think it's the most thrilling thing I ever heard! But first, will you stop calling me Mrs Blair? Suzanne will be much better. Is that agreed?'

'I would love it, Suzanne.'

'Good girl. Now, you recognized Sir Eustace's secretary — not Pagett, the other one — as the man who was stabbed and came into your cabin for shelter?'

I nodded. But this 'stewardess' is rather strange . . . as soon as you told me about her, I had an idea. Are you sure she wasn't a man?'

'She was very tall,' I admitted. 'And I did think her face was familiar.'
Suzanne got a piece of paper and began to draw with quick confidence.

'There! The Reverend Edward Chichester. Now for the rest.' She finished and passed the paper to me. 'Is that your stewardess?'

'Why, yes!' I cried. 'How clever of you!'

'From the moment I saw him, I thought Chichester was no good.'

'And he tried to get Cabin 17!' I answered quickly.

'Yes. But what does it all mean? What should have happened at one o'clock in Cabin 17? It can't be the stabbing of the secretary. It must have been some kind of appointment — Rayburn was on his way to meet someone when he was stabbed. But who was the appointment with? Certainly not with you.'

We both sat, silent for a minute or two, then Suzanne came up with another idea. 'Is it possible something was hidden in the cabin?'

'That would explain why my cabin was searched the next morning.'

'Was someone looking for your piece of paper?'

'But it was only a time and a date — and they were both past by then.'

Suzanne nodded. 'No, it wasn't the paper. But I'd rather like to see it.'

I had brought it with me, and gave it to her. She studied it closely. 'There's a dot after the '17'. Why not a dot after the '1' too?'

'There's a space,' I pointed out.

'Yes, but . . . '

She held the paper close under the light. 'Anne, that isn't a dot! That's a weak spot in the paper! You see? Just go by the spaces!'
I read out the numbers as I now saw them. ‘1 71 22.’

‘You see,’ said Suzanne. ‘It’s one o’clock still, and the 22nd — but it’s Cabin 71! My cabin!’

We were so pleased with our discovery and so excited — then suddenly I had a very different thought. ‘But this isn’t your cabin, is it, Suzanne?’

‘No, the purser moved me into it.’

‘I wonder if it was reserved by someone who did not board the ship. Could we find out?’

‘We don’t need to,’ cried Suzanne. ‘The purser told me. The cabin had been booked for Madame Nadina, a celebrated Russian dancer. She has never appeared in London, but she is loved in Paris. She was a great success there during the War. A thoroughly bad woman, I believe, but very attractive.’

‘The purser told me how sorry he was that she wasn’t on board, then Colonel Race told me that there were some odd stories about her in Paris. That she might have been mixed up in espionage. I think that is why Colonel Race was in Paris. He’s told me some very interesting things. There was a large gang of international criminals whose leader, a man called “the Colonel”, was thought to be an Englishman. He was very clever! When they committed a crime, “the Colonel” made sure the police had the evidence to arrest somebody who was innocent. This woman was supposed to work for him, but nobody could prove it. Yes, Nadina is just the woman to be involved in this business. The appointment on the morning of the 22nd was with her in this cabin. But where is she? Why didn’t she sail?’

And suddenly I knew. ‘Because she was dead,’ I said. ‘Suzanne, Nadina was the woman murdered at Marlow!’

My thoughts went back to that room where I had found the roll of film. And why did I connect that thought with Suzanne?
Suddenly I held her arms and almost shook her in my excitement. ‘The film that was dropped through the ventilator! That was on the 22\textsuperscript{nd}!’

‘The one I lost?’

‘Why would anyone return it to you that way – in the middle of the night? It’s a mad idea. No, the film had been taken out of the tin, and something else put inside. Have you still got it?’

‘Here it is. I put it next to my bed’

She passed it to me.

It was the usual round tin container. I took it with a shaking hand, but even as I did so my heart jumped. It was much heavier than it should have been.

I pulled off the lid and a stream of glassy stones rolled on to the bed. ‘Stones,’ I said, disappointed.

‘Stones?’ cried Suzanne. ‘No, Anne, not stones! Diamonds!’
Chapter 15

Diamonds!

‘Are you sure, Suzanne?’

‘Oh, yes, my dear. I’ve seen rough diamonds before – this is what diamonds look like when they are taken from the ground. It’s only after they have been cut and polished that they become the glittering beauties we love. And these are excellent diamonds. I think there’s a story behind them.’

‘The story we heard tonight,’ I cried. ‘Colonel Race’s story. It can’t be a coincidence. He told it for a reason.’

‘To see its effect, you mean?’

I nodded. ‘Who is Colonel Race?’

‘That’s a good question,’ said Suzanne. ‘He’s well known as a big-game hunter and often travels to Africa. But this is the first time I have met him. There’s a general idea that he does Secret Service work. I don’t know if it’s true.’

‘I have two more questions. How is Colonel Race involved in this business? And what became of the other young man? Not Eardsley – Lucas! The one who disappeared during the War. We only know he was missing in action. It was never confirmed that he was dead.’

‘We have some answers,’ Suzanne said. ‘We know that these people want the diamonds. That’s why “the Man in the Brown Suit” killed Nadina.’

‘He did not kill her,’ I said quickly.

‘Of course he killed her. Who else could have done so?’

‘I don’t know. But he didn’t kill her.’

‘He went into the house three minutes after her, then came out looking as if he’d seen a ghost.’

‘Because he found her dead.’
'But nobody else went in.'

'Then the murderer got in another way. There was no need for him to walk past the lodge, he could have climbed over the wall.'

Suzanne looked at me. "The Man in the Brown Suit," she said thoughtfully. 'He was the "doctor" in the Tube and he followed the woman to Marlow. But what did he do when he left Marlow?'

I said nothing.

'Nadina was murdered in Sir Eustace Pedler's house. And it was his secretary, Rayburn, who was stabbed and came into your cabin to hide. Two connections! I wonder, is it possible that the "doctor" had some control over Sir Eustace? That he made Sir Eustace bring him as his secretary, so he could get out of England safely? That in fact, Rayburn is "the Man in the Brown Suit". Rayburn's got a scar, I know — but a scar can easily be created with make-up. He's the right height. I think he had already read the paper that he dropped. He saw the dot as you did, so he tried to reach Cabin 17 at one o'clock on the 22nd. On the way there somebody stabbed him . . .'

'Who?'

'Chichester. Yes, it all fits. Send a telegram to Lord Nasby to say you have found "the Man in the Brown Suit", and you will make your fortune, Anne!'

I felt myself shaking.

Suzanne's eyes searched mine. Then she said gently, 'It will save time and trouble if you tell me all about it.'

'I'm not ashamed.' I said slowly. 'It's something that just happened. You can't be ashamed of that. He was rude and ungrateful, but I think I understand why. It's like a dog that's been badly treated — it will bite anybody. That's what he was
like — bitter and angry. I don’t know why I care — but I do. Just seeing him has turned my whole life upside-down. I love him. I want him, and I will make him love me. I’d die for him. There — now you know!’

Suzanne looked at me for a long time. ‘I’ve never met anybody who was so practical and so passionate at the same time,’ she said at last. ‘So you will not send a telegram to Lord Nasby?’

I shook my head.

‘And you believe Rayburn is innocent?’

‘Yes, and I also believe that innocent people can have a rope put around their neck and be hanged until they are dead.’

‘But, Anne dear, face the facts. Despite all you say, he may have murdered this woman.’

‘No,’ I said. ‘He did not. He might have followed her there with the idea of killing her. But not with a rope, never! Taking a rope meant it was a planned and cold-blooded murder. Rayburn is not that type of man. If he had killed her, he would have strangled her with his hands. It would have been a crime of passion.’

Suzanne gave a little shiver. She said, with approval. ‘Anne, I am beginning to see why you find this young man of yours so attractive!’
Chapter 16

The next morning, using some of my money, I persuaded the night steward to talk. On the previous voyage from Cape Town to England, one of the passengers had paid him to drop a roll of film into a lady’s cabin when the ship made its return journey to Cape Town. It was just a harmless joke. The film was to be dropped through the ventilator into Cabin 71 — at 1 a.m. on January 22nd. He had not been told the lady’s name, so he had no reason to think Mrs Blair was not the right lady. The name of the passenger who paid him was Carton — the man killed on the Tube. So one mystery was now answered.

As we came nearer to Cape Town, I considered my plans. There were so many people I wanted to watch. Mr Chichester, Sir Eustace and his secretary, and Colonel Race! How could I do it?

On our last evening, we were sitting on deck when Sir Eustace asked his secretary some simple question about railway delays in Italy. Mr Pagett gave the same sort of nervous answer I had noticed before. When Sir Eustace asked Mrs Blair to dance, I quickly moved to the chair next to the secretary.

‘I have always wanted to go to Florence. Did you enjoy your visit?’

‘Indeed I did, Miss Beddingfeld. I’m sorry, I must go and deal with some work . . .’

I put my hand on his arm. ‘Oh, but you never seem to want to talk about Florence, Mr Pagett, I believe you have a guilty secret!’

I felt him jump. ‘Not at all, Miss Beddingfeld. I would be delighted to talk, but there really are some letters . . .’

‘Oh, Mr Pagett. Florence, on the banks of the Arno. A beautiful river. And you remember the Duomo?’
'Of course.'

'Another beautiful river,' I said — when in fact the Duomo was the cathedral church of Florence.

'Yes, certainly.'

Mr Pagett had never been in Florence in his life.

But if not in Florence, where had he been? In England? At the time of the Mill House murder? I decided to test that possibility.

'The strange thing is,' I said, 'that I thought I had seen you before. But I must be mistaken — since you were in Florence at the time.'

There was a hunted look in his eyes.

'Yet — I thought I saw you at Marlow.'

Hardly able to speak, Mr Pagett got up and ran.

★★★★

That night I went to Suzanne’s cabin, full of excitement. ‘You see,’ I said, as I finished my story, ‘Pagett was in Marlow at the time of the murder. Are you so sure now that “the Man in the Brown Suit” is guilty?’

‘I’m sure of one thing,’ Suzanne said, ‘You have made an important discovery. Now we know Pagett does not have an alibi.’

‘Exactly! So we must watch him.’

‘As well as everybody else,’ she said. ‘Well, I wanted to talk to you about that — and about finance. No, don’t be proud, please be practical. We are partners — I would not give you money just because I liked you — what I want is excitement and I am prepared to pay for it. We are in this together. To begin with you will come with me to the Mount Nelson Hotel. I shall pay and we will make our plans.’
It was late, after midnight, but I felt too excited to go to bed. It was my last night on board. I went up on deck. The air was fresh and cool. The decks were dark and empty. I leaned over the rail, watching the white water that the passage of the ship left behind. Ahead was Africa, a wonderful world. I stood, lost in a dream.

Suddenly I had a strong feeling of danger. As I turned, a hand went round my throat. I couldn’t make a sound. I fought with all my strength. Hardly able to breathe, I hit out at the shadowy form of the man who was trying to throw me into the sea.

Then another man came running and knocked my enemy down onto the deck with one punch. I fell back against the rail, sick and shaking. My protector turned quickly to me.

‘You’re hurt!’

It was Rayburn, the man I loved. There was something savage in his voice, a terrible threat against the person who had hurt me.

Quick as a flash, our fallen enemy was up and running. Rayburn went after him — and I followed. Round we went to the other side. There the man lay, with Rayburn bending over him.

‘Did you hit him again?’ I asked.

‘There was no need. I found him like this.’

Rayburn lit a match. I am not sure which one of us was more surprised. It was Guy Pagett.

‘Pagett,’ Rayburn was clearly shocked. ‘I never suspected —’ He turned to me. ‘And you? Where do you fit in this? How much do you know?’

I smiled. ‘A lot, Mr Lucas!’
He caught my arm painfully. ‘Where did you get that name?’
‘Isn’t it yours?’ I asked. ‘Or do you prefer to be called “The Man in the Brown Suit”?’
That shook him. He let me go and fell back a step. ‘Are you a girl, or a witch?’ he said quietly.
‘I am a friend,’ I stepped towards him. ‘I offered you my help once – I offer it again. Will you have it?’
His anger shocked me. ‘No. I’ll have nothing to do with you or any woman.’
Again, he made me angry.
‘Perhaps,’ I said, ‘you don’t understand how much you are in my power . . . ’
He came forward quickly. ‘And do you understand that I could take you by the throat like this.’ I felt his hands close around my throat and press – ever so gently. ‘And crush the life out of you! And then throw your body into the sea. What do you say to that?’
I laughed. I loved the feeling of his hands on my throat. I would not have exchanged that moment for any moment in my life. With a short laugh he let me go. ‘What’s your name?’
‘Anne Beddingfeld.’
‘Does nothing frighten you, Anne?’
‘Oh, yes,’ I said, with a calmness I didn’t feel. ‘Wasps.’
He gave the same short laugh as before. Then he pushed Pagett with his foot. ‘What shall we do with this rubbish? Throw it overboard?’
‘If you like,’ I answered.
‘I admire your strong feelings. But we will leave him. Goodbye, Miss Beddingfeld.’
‘Until we meet again, Mr Lucas.’
Again he was shocked. He came nearer. ‘Why do you say that?’

‘Because,’ I said with certainty, ‘we will meet again.’

I stepped back. I heard him start after me, then pause, and a word came through the darkness. I think it was ‘witch’!
Chapter 17

Extract from the diary of Sir Eustace Pedler, Mount Nelson Hotel, Cape Town.

To begin with, where is Rayburn? We have not seen him since we arrived in Cape Town. To make everything worse, Guy Pagett decided to have a fight on the last night on the ship. He has a lump the size of an egg on his head! The whole thing is very annoying. One of my secretaries has disappeared and the other looks like a bad boxer. I can't take him out with me – everybody in Cape Town would laugh at me. He's a mad man!

I am in a very bad temper. I had a terrible breakfast with terrible people: Dutch waitresses with thick ankles who took half an hour to bring me a bad bit of bacon.

And a very serious thing has happened. I went to my appointment with the Prime Minister, taking Milray's letter. It looked perfectly normal – but inside was a blank sheet of paper!

Now I'm in real trouble. And Pagett, helpfully reminding me what went wrong, makes it worse. However, in the end I had to listen to him.

'Remember, Sir Eustace, Mr Milray did not give you anything formal. You accepted Rayburn because of what he said about himself.'

'You think Rayburn is a criminal, then?' I said slowly.

Pagett did.

My idea was to do nothing. A man who has been made to look a fool is not keen to broadcast the fact. But Pagett hurried to the police station, then sent telegrams. We got Milray's answer that evening. He knew nothing about Rayburn!

Pagett is now full of bright ideas. He believes that Rayburn is the famous 'Man in the Brown Suit'. He is probably right. He
usually is. But all this is getting unpleasant. The sooner I go to Rhodesia, the better. I have explained to Pagett that he will not be coming with me.

‘My dear fellow,’ I said, ‘you know what Rayburn looks like, so you must stay here to identify him for the police. Besides, I cannot go about with a secretary who appears to have been fighting in the street.’

Looking as if he had just eaten a lemon, Pagett remained focussed on his work.

‘Your private carriage will be joined to the eleven o’clock train tomorrow morning. But what will you do about a secretary, Sir Eustace?’

‘There’s Miss Beddingfeld,’ I said thoughtfully. ‘I will offer her a job.’

Pagett was against this idea. He does not like Anne Beddingfeld. Ever since the night of the lump on the head, he has shown uncontrolled emotion whenever she is mentioned. Just to annoy him, I shall ask her. As I said before, she has extremely nice legs.
Chapter 18

Anne’s Story

I will never forget my first sight of Table Mountain. I got up early and went out on deck as we came into the bay. There were white clouds above Table Mountain, and below, all the way down to the sea, was the town, golden and magical in the morning sunlight. I heard a quiet footstep behind me – and knew who it was. Then his voice came, pleasant and normal. ‘Miss Beddingfeld. I want to apologize. I behaved very badly last night.’

I turned. ‘It – it was a strange night,’ I said. ‘Will you forgive me?’

I held out my hand and he took it. ‘You are mixed up in a dangerous business, Miss Beddingfeld. I want to warn you, leave it alone. These men will do anything. They are murderers. Look at last night.’

‘I know. But why are you warning me?’

He said quietly, ‘It may be the last thing I can do for you. Once I am off this ship I will be all right – but I may not get off this ship.’

‘What?’ I cried.

‘I’m afraid you are not the only person on board who knows I am “The Man in the Brown Suit”.’

‘If you think I told anybody . . .’ I said angrily.

He smiled. ‘I trust you, Miss Beddingfeld. If I ever said I did not, I lied. But there is one person on board who has always known. If he speaks, I am finished. But I am going to gamble, I am going to take a risk that he will stay silent.’

‘What makes you think you can win?’
'Because if the police get me, I will be no more use to him. If I am free, I might be! Well, in an hour I will know.'

He held my hand hard, for a minute his eyes seemed to burn into mine, then he turned and left.

★★★★

I did not enjoy the next two hours of formalities. Not until I was on land and all the passengers had got off the ship and no arrest had been made, did I breathe easily again. Then I realized that it was a day filled with sunshine. Cape Town was beautiful: the sun, the air, the flowers! I was delighted.

The Mount Nelson Hotel had given me a room next to Suzanne’s with a lovely view of Table Bay – but we did not take time to admire it. We went straight down to breakfast.

‘Did you see Sir Eustace?’ I asked Suzanne afterwards in private. ‘He was marching out of the breakfast-room as we went in. He’d had a bad meal and was telling the waiter what he thought about it.’

Suzanne smiled. ‘And did you see Mr Pagett, Anne? He’s got a lump on his head. What has he been doing?’

‘He’s been trying to push me into the sea,’ I replied, and gave her the details.

★★★★

Suzanne was having lunch with friends that morning, and they came to the hotel at eleven to collect her. I was left to entertain myself. I went through the grounds of the hotel and followed a cool, shady street until I came to the main road. I walked around, enjoying the sunlight and a market full of flowers and fruit.
When I returned to the hotel, I found, to my surprise and pleasure, a note from a Mr Raffini, the curator of the Cape Town Museum. He had read in the newspaper that I would be arriving on the Kilmorden – I was described as the daughter of Professor Beddingfeld. He had known and admired my father, and his wife would like to invite me to tea with them that afternoon at their house.

I set off after lunch and followed his directions. The train to Muizenberg, where the curator lived, travelled slowly around Table Mountain for half an hour and when it stopped, I was facing the sea again.

There was some very exciting bathing here – the people had short, curved boards and came floating in on the waves. It was too early to go to tea, so I went to the bathing pavilion to hire a bathing suit and towel. They asked if I wanted a surfboard.

‘Yes, please.’ I said.

Surfing looks easy. It is not. By accident I got a good ride on my board, and came out delighted, and determined to return on the first opportunity.

The curator’s house was high up on the mountain. I rang the bell, and a smiling local boy answered it.

‘Mrs Raffini?’ I inquired.

He welcomed me in, led me along a hall and opened a door. For a moment, I paused in sudden doubt. As I went inside, the door shut sharply behind me.

A man got up from his seat behind a table. ‘Miss Beddingfeld. Here you are. And here you stay.’

I had made a fool of myself. I was in the hands of the enemy.
Chapter 19

Everything Rayburn had said that morning came back to me very unpleasantly. I did my best to be brave. ‘I was invited here by the curator of the Museum. If I have made a mistake...’

‘A mistake? Yes, a big mistake!’ His laugh was ugly. He was a tall Dutchman, with a red beard.

‘My friends know where I have gone,’ I said. ‘If I have not returned by this evening, they will come in search of me.’

‘Which friends?’

I thought quickly. ‘Mrs Blair, for one,’ I said.

‘I don’t think so,’ he shook his head. ‘You have not seen her since eleven this morning. And you received our note at lunchtime.’ His words showed how closely I had been followed, but I was not going to give in.

‘You are very clever,’ I said. ‘Perhaps you have heard of the telephone? Mrs Blair phoned when I was resting in my room after lunch. I told her where I was going.’ I was pleased to see this worried him.

‘Enough! Tomorrow you have questions to answer. And we will make you talk.’ He called and two men came and took me upstairs into a dusty attic room under the roof. First they tied a piece of material tightly over my mouth. Then they tied me with a rope until I could hardly move. I turned and twisted but I could not get loose or call for help.

At last I fainted, or fell asleep. When I woke it was dark. The moon was high in the sky and shining down through a small window in the roof. I could hardly breathe through the cloth and I was in terrible pain from being tied up for so long. Then I saw something in the corner – a bit of broken glass shining
in the moonlight. My arms and legs were helpless, but I could still roll. Slowly, I began to move. It was painful—but I reached the glass. Even then it took a long time to cut through the rope around my wrists.

Once my hands had lost their stiffness, I was able to undo the cloth and then the rest of the rope. But it was some time before I could stand. I went quietly to the door and looked out. Silence. The moonlight through a window showed me the staircase. I went down it as quietly as I could. Half way I heard the faint sound of voices.

With great care, I went on down to the hall—then I stopped still. A servant boy was sitting by the hall door—but he was asleep. Should I go on? The voices came from the room I had been in. One was the Dutchman, the other seemed familiar too. I had to risk waking the boy up. I crossed the hall without a sound, knelt by the door and looked through the keyhole. There was the big Dutchman. The other speaker was—Mr Chichester!

'It is dangerous. What if her friends come after her?' the Dutchman said.

'Nonsense,' Chichester answered. 'They have no idea where she is. Anyway, it's the Colonel's order.'

The 'Colonel'—this was the dangerous criminal Suzanne had told me about.

'Why not kill her?' the Dutchman asked.

'I would,' said Chichester. 'But the Colonel wants information from this girl.'

'The diamonds,' I thought to myself.

'Well,' continued Chichester, 'give me the lists.'
For a long time they seemed to talk only about large quantities of vegetables. Dates, prices and places, which I did not understand. It was half an hour before they finished.

'Good,' said Chichester, standing up. 'I will take these for the Colonel.'

Quick as a flash I was across the hall and outside. I ran down the street as if my life depended on it.
At the hotel, Suzanne was so happy when I returned safely that she held me tightly. ‘Anne, my dear, I’ve been so worried. What have you been doing?’

‘Having adventures,’ I replied. When I had finished telling my story, she asked one question.

‘What are we going to do now?’

We started with a large breakfast for me. Colonel Race joined us, with a strange expression on his face. ‘Have you heard? It seems that the famous “Man in the Brown Suit” was on the boat with us.’


‘He fooled Pedler into taking him as his secretary. Rayburn, he called himself.’

‘Have they arrested him?’ asked Suzanne. Under the table she held my hand.

‘No. He’s disappeared.’

‘What does Sir Eustace think of it?’

The chance to hear Sir Eustace’s views on the matter came soon enough. The poor man was in a very sad condition. Encouraged by Suzanne’s sympathy, he told us his many troubles.

‘First, a strange woman has the bad manners to get herself murdered in my house. Why my house? Why, of all the houses in Great Britain, did they choose the Mill House? What harm have I ever done the woman that she got herself murdered there?’

Suzanne made one of her sympathetic noises and Sir Eustace continued, ‘And, if that’s not enough, the man who murdered her does something even worse – he makes himself my secretary! I tell you, I am tired of secretaries. Either they are secret murderers, or they have fights. Have you seen the lump on Pagett’s head?'
Of course you have. How can I go about with a secretary like that? I am finished with secretaries – unless I have a girl. A nice girl, with bright eyes, who will hold my hand when I’m feeling angry. What about you, Miss Anne? Will you take the job?’

‘How often will I have to hold your hand?’ I asked, laughing.
‘All day long,’ replied Sir Eustace.
‘I could not get much work done then,’ I reminded him.
‘That’s all right. All this work is Pagett’s idea. I am happy to be leaving him behind in Cape Town.’

‘He is staying here?’
‘Yes, he’ll enjoy himself chasing after Rayburn. But what about my offer? Remember, there are lots of lions in Rhodesia. You will like lions. All girls do.’

‘Will they be practising low jumps?’ I asked, laughing. ‘No, thank you, Sir Eustace.’

Sir Eustace smiled at me, sighed deeply, then opened the door to the next room, and called to Pagett. ‘Pagett, could you go to the Trade Office and ask them for a woman to take to Rhodesia? She must have bright eyes and not object if I hold her hand.’ Then Sir Eustace turned back to me. ‘I am serious, you know, Miss Anne. Will you come? Mrs Blair will be your chaperone, and you can have a holiday to dig for bones.’

‘Thank you very much, Sir Eustace – I will.’
Chapter 21

Extract from the diary of Sir Eustace Pedler.

Pagett got a secretary for me — a woman called Miss Pettigrew. I have never seen a woman with such a hard face! She must be nearly forty, wears old-fashioned glasses and sensible boots and she is so organized she will drive me mad.

At the moment I am travelling to Rhodesia with a group of women. Race goes off with the two best-looking, of course, and leaves me with the one with sensible boots! And this is my private carriage, not Race’s.

All afternoon Anne Beddingsfeld has been looking out of the window with Race, admiring the beauty of the Hex River Valley. Perhaps she is afraid of Miss Pettigrew. I don’t blame her. There is nothing attractive about Miss Pettigrew — she is a frightening female with large feet, more like a man than a woman.

I am going to stop working on my “Memories”. Instead, I shall write a short article — ‘Secretaries I have had’. 1, A murderer running from justice. 2, A man who has done something bad in Italy. 3, Miss Pettigrew, who, I have no doubt, is really a dangerous criminal! Probably one of Pagett’s Italian friends. I am sure that one day the world will find out that Pagett has been making fools of us all.

I went to join the women, expecting to be welcomed happily. But they were both fascinated by one of Race’s traveller’s stories. I think I should call this carriage not ‘Sir Eustace Pedler and Party’, but ‘Colonel Race and Harem’.

‘I’m glad we came up here in daylight,’ cried Anne Beddingsfeld.
It was a wonderful sight. There were great mountains all around us, through which the train turned and twisted upwards.

‘Is this the best train in the day to Rhodesia?’ asked Anne.

‘In the day?’ laughed Race. ‘My dear Miss Anne, there are only three trains a week. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. We won’t arrive at Victoria Falls until next Saturday.

‘How long are you going to stay at the Falls, Sir Eustace?’ Mrs Blair asked.

‘That depends on what is happening in Johannesburg,’ I said. ‘In England I pretend to be an expert on South African politics. But from what I hear, Johannesburg will be a very unpleasant place to visit in about a week’s time. I don’t want to find out what life is like in a revolution.’

★★★★

Thursday night
We have just left Kimberley, and Anne Beddingfeld has told us a surprising secret. It seems that she is in fact a reporter working for a newspaper. She sent a long telegram from De Aar this morning. All the time she has been looking for ‘the Man in the Brown Suit’. She did not know who he was on the Kilmorden — in fact, she hardly had the chance to find out, but she’s now very busy reporting: ‘How I travelled out with the Murderer’, and inventing stories of ‘What he said to me’, etc. I know how these things are done. I do them myself, in my ‘Memories’. She’s clever, though. She has discovered the name of the woman who was killed in my house — a Russian dancer called Nadina.

The police believe that Rayburn might have been on Monday’s train for Rhodesia. They contacted people all along the line and nobody of his description was found, but that doesn’t mean a lot.
He's a clever young man and he knows Africa. He has probably changed himself into an old native woman.

Anyway, Anne Beddingfeld is looking for him. She wants the fame of discovering him for herself and the Daily Budget. Young women are very cold-blooded nowadays. I suggested to her that it was an unwomanly action. She laughed, and told me that if she found him, she would make her fortune.

Tomorrow we shall be going through Bechuanaland. The dust will be terrible. Also at every station little native children come and try to sell wooden animals that they make themselves. I am rather afraid that Mrs Blair may lose control of herself.

There is a strange attraction about these toys that may make her unable to refuse them.

Friday evening.
As I feared. Mrs Blair and Anne have bought forty-nine wooden animals!
Chapter 22

Anne’s Story

I enjoyed the journey up to Rhodesia. First the wonderful scenery of the Hex River, then the wild Karoo, a hot, dusty desert of stones and rocks – and finally, in Bechuanaland, the delightful wooden animals the natives brought to sell whenever the train stopped. Suzanne and I began at once to buy a collection of these – it was very enjoyable.

Suzanne and I had talked half the night, making our plans. We had decided that as Harry Rayburn was thought of as ‘the Man in the Brown Suit’ – through no fault of mine – I could help him best by seeming to be against him. The solution was the Daily Budget. As far as I knew, the dead woman was still not known. I started by sending a telegram to Lord Nasby, the newspaper owner, suggesting that the dead woman was the Russian dancer ‘Nadina’ who had been delighting Paris for so long.

The Daily Budget had its biggest story ever. ‘Victim of the Mill House Murder identified by our special reporter’, and so on. ‘Our reporter travels with the murderer. The Man in the Brown Suit. What he’s really like.’

I received approval and full instructions by telegram at Bulawayo. I was reporting for the Daily Budget, and I had a private word of praise from Lord Nasby. My job was to catch the murderer!
Chapter 23

When we arrived at Bulawayo, Sir Eustace was rather bad tempered. I think it was our wooden animals that annoyed him – especially the large giraffe with the very long neck. To carry forty-nine wooden animals is a problem. We hired two porters, Suzanne and I carried all we could, Colonel Race helped, and I placed the big giraffe into Sir Eustace’s arms. Even Miss Pettigrew did not escape.

I had a feeling Miss Pettigrew did not like me. She avoided me as much as she could. And the funny thing was, her face seemed familiar.

★ ★ ★

I didn’t sleep well that night, because of bad dreams. But the morning was fresh and lovely, with wooded hills as far as I could see. I loved it more than any place I had ever seen. I wished then that I could live there always.

That afternoon, Colonel Race pointed a long way ahead of us to a cloud of white mist. ‘The spray from the water at Victoria Falls,’ he said. ‘We are nearly there.’

I had a strong feeling that I had come home . . . yet I had never been here before.

★ ★ ★

We walked from the train to the big white building that was the hotel. There were no roads, no houses. We went out on the verandah, and there, half a mile away, were the Victoria Falls. I’ve never seen anything so grand and beautiful. I was happy,
excited — restless. I had the strange feeling that I was waiting for something that would happen soon.

After tea we were taken by smiling natives to the bridge over the Zambezi. It was a wonderful sight — the chasm was a huge cut down into the earth, and the river below. The spray from the water falling into the chasm was so thick that it became a white cloud — and now and then, through this cloud we could see the great waterfall. We went over the bridge and walked along the path, marked out with white stones, which led around the edge of the gorge. Finally the path led down towards the chasm.

‘Shall we go down?’ Colonel Race asked. ‘Or leave it until tomorrow? It will take some time, and it’s a long climb up again.’

‘We will leave it until tomorrow,’ Sir Eustace said firmly, and led the way back.

★ ★ ★

That night, when I went to my room, I was too excited to sleep. I lay back in a chair and allowed myself to daydream. All the time I knew something was coming, something that would change my life was coming nearer and nearer . . . There was a knock at the door. It was a boy with a note for me.

_I must see you. I dare not come to the hotel. Will you come to meet me at the top of the path into the chasm? In memory of Cabin 17 please come. The man you knew as Harry Rayburn._

My heart beat faster and faster. He was here! Oh, I had known it! I had felt him near me. I had to be careful. He was being hunted. I quickly left the hotel, and took the path to the bridge. I crossed it, but as I went on, I heard a noise behind me. I knew immediately that I was threatened. It was the same feeling as on the Kilmorden that night — a warning of danger.
I looked over my shoulder. A man came out of the shadow. I ran, hearing him behind me, coming closer. I ran faster, watching the white stones that showed me where to step. Suddenly my foot felt emptiness. I heard the man behind me laugh, and that was the last thing I heard as I fell head first.
I woke up slowly and painfully. My head and my left arm hurt. When I tried to move I felt myself falling again — and the nightmares began. Once, Harry Rayburn’s face seemed to come to me out of the mist. Once, someone put a cup to my lips and I drank. A black face smiled into mine. Then the dreams began again — long, troubled dreams. Then came darkness — and sleep.

I woke at last with my mind peaceful. I remembered the last terrible moment of falling. But I had not been killed. I was weak, but I was alive. I was in a small room with rough wooden walls. On them were the skins of animals and elephant tusks. I was lying on a bed, also covered with animal skins, and my left arm was bandaged. It felt stiff and uncomfortable. Then I saw a man between me and the window, and my heart beat faster. It was Harry Rayburn. ‘Feeling better?’

I could not answer. There were tears on my face. I held his hand in both of mine.

‘Don’t cry, Anne. Please don’t cry. You are safe now. No one will hurt you.’

He comforted me until I slept again.

When I woke, the sun was high and I was alone. As I tried to sit up, an old native woman came in. She smiled at me, brought me water, and helped me wash. Then she brought me soup, which I ate quickly. Suddenly she stood up. Harry came in and she left us alone. He smiled at me. ‘Better today?’

‘Yes, much better, but confused. Where am I?’

‘You are on a small island on the Zambezi River, about four miles away from the Falls.’
‘Oh!’ I cried. ‘I must send a message to Suzanne. She will be very worried.’

‘Who is Suzanne?’

‘Mrs Blair. I was with her and Sir Eustace and Colonel Race at the hotel – but you knew that?’

He shook his head. ‘No. I only know that I found you, caught in a tree, unconscious and with a badly twisted arm.’

‘Where was the tree?’

‘Below the edge of the chasm. If your clothes had not caught on the branches of the tree, you would be dead.’

His words brought back a memory of fear.

‘But what about the note you sent, asking me to meet you?’

He stared at me. ‘I sent no note.’

I blushed, feeling my whole face turn red. ‘So why were you in the place where I needed you to be? And what are you doing in this part of the world, anyway?’

‘I live here,’ he said simply.

‘On this island?’

‘Yes, I came here after the War. Sometimes I take tourists from the hotel out in my boat, but it costs me very little to live, and I usually do whatever I want.’

‘But why were you walking about so conveniently for me?’ I asked.

‘I could not sleep. I had the feeling something was going to happen. In the end I walked down towards the Falls. Then I heard you scream.’

‘Why didn’t you get help from the hotel instead of carrying me here?’ I asked.

And now he blushed. ‘You think I should have told your friends, who allowed a murderer to lead you to your death? No,
I promised myself I'd take care of you. Nobody comes to this island. I got old Batani to look after you. I helped her once when she was ill and she's loyal. She will never say a word. I could keep you here for months and nobody would ever know.'

I could keep you here for months and nobody would ever know! Oh, such pleasing words!

'You did the right thing,' I said quietly. 'And I will not try to contact anyone. That note did not come from a stranger.'

'If you would like my advice . . .' he began.

'I don't expect I will,' I answered honestly. 'But there is no harm in hearing.'

Harry laughed. His whole face changed when he laughed. It became boyish, happy - a different personality. 'What I was going to say was this. I think you should stay here until you are strong again. Your enemies will believe you are dead. They will think your body was carried away by the river.'

I shivered.

'Once you are completely well again, you can travel back to England.'

'Then I would be a failure,' I objected angrily.

'There speaks a foolish schoolgirl.'

'I'm not a foolish schoolgirl,' I cried. 'I am a woman.'

He looked at me with an expression I could not understand, as I sat up blushing red and excited. 'So you are,' he said and went quickly out.

***

It was a strange time. Harry was out a lot, but we spent many hours together, lying in the shade of the trees, talking about everything in the world - disagreeing about some things and agreeing about others in a most wonderful way. A real and lasting
friendship developed between us. That — and something more.
The time was coming when I should leave — but I did not want
to go. Was he going to let me go? Without a word?

There were times of silence and moments when he would
walk off by himself. One evening the moment of decision came.
We had finished our meal and were sitting in the doorway of
the little house. The sun was going down. My hair, straight and
black, hung to my knees — Harry had not been able to give me
any hairpins. I felt, rather than saw him looking at me. ‘You
look like a witch, Anne,’ he said, and there was something in
his voice that had never been there before. He reached out and
touched my hair. I shivered. Suddenly he jumped up and spoke
angrily. ‘You must go, do you hear?’ he cried. ‘I cannot control
myself any more. I’m only a man, after all. You must go, Anne.
You must. You’re not a fool. You know yourself that this cannot
go on.’

‘I suppose not,’ I said slowly. ‘But — it has been a happy time.’

‘Happy? It’s been torture!’

‘As bad as that!’

‘What do you hurt me for? Why are you laughing at me?
Why do you say that?’

‘I am not laughing. If you want me to go, I will go. But if you
want me to stay — I will stay.’

‘Not that!’ he cried. ‘Don’t, Anne. Do you realize what I am?
A criminal. A man hunted down. Any day they will come for
me. You’re so young, Anne, and so beautiful. All the world is in
front of you — love, life, everything. Mine’s behind me — burnt.’

‘If you don’t want me . . .’

‘You know I want you. You know that I would give anything
to pick you up in my arms and keep you here, hidden away
from the world, forever. Anne, with your long witch’s hair, and
your eyes that are golden and brown and green and never stop laughing even when your mouth is serious. But I will protect you from yourself and from me. You must go tonight. You must go back to England, Anne — and — and marry and be happy.'

'With a safe man who'll give me a good home!'

'Better that than staying here with me and destroying your future.'

'And what about you?'

His face became hard. 'I have my work. I will clear my name or die in the attempt, and I will kill the man who tried to murder you.'

'We must be fair,' I said. 'He did not in fact push me over.'

'His plan was cleverer than that. He had moved the stones which mark the path. There are bushes growing over the edge. He'd balanced the outside stones on them, so you would think you were on the path when you were stepping over the edge. If I find him, I will make him suffer!'

He paused for a long time, then said in a different tone, 'I want you to hear the whole story, Anne.'
Chapter 25

The sun had set and the dark of the African night was around us as Harry began his story.

'It started when two young men became friends at Cambridge. They both loved South Africa, and both wanted to travel to the wild places of the world. After he left Cambridge, Eardsley had a final, bitter argument with his father. The old man was one of South Africa's richest men and he had paid his son's debts twice. He refused to do so again, when Eardsley got into debt a third time. So those two young friends went to South America to search for diamonds. It was a wonderful time, but hard too – and their friendship became so strong it could only be broken by death. When those young men found their diamonds, they felt nothing less than joy. It was not the money – you see, Eardsley was used to money, and when his father died, he would become a millionaire. Lucas had always been poor and was used to it. No, it was the pure delight of discovery.' He paused, and then apologized. 'You don't mind me telling it this way, do you? As though I wasn't in it at all. It seems like that now, when I look back and see those two boys. I almost forget that I was one of them.'

'Tell it any way you like,' I said, and he continued. 'We came to Kimberley with a wonderful collection of diamonds to show the experts. And then – in the hotel at Kimberley – we met her –'

I felt myself becoming angry.

'Anita Grünberg. She was an actress. Young and very beautiful – and mysterious, and that made her more attractive for two boys back from exploring. She had an easy task, stealing our diamonds. We both chased after her. But the truth
is that she was married — to a man who worked for De Beers, checking diamonds — though nobody knew it. She pretended to have a great interest in our adventures, and we told her everything. We even showed her the diamonds. Oh, she played her part well!

‘After the De Beers robbery, the police were quick to investigate us. They took us and they took our diamonds. At first we laughed. Then the diamonds were shown in court — and they were the stones stolen from De Beers. Anita Grünberg had exchanged them for ours and disappeared. We said that these were not the stones we had brought to Kimberly, but no one believed us.

‘Sir Laurence Eardsley succeeded in getting the case dismissed — but we were ruined. Our good name was destroyed. People thought we were thieves. And the old man was never well again. A week later, the War began — and the best friend I ever had was killed.

‘I promise you, Anne, it was mainly because of my friend that I felt so bitter about that woman. His feelings were greater than mine. She had become the centre of his world — and her betrayal destroyed his life.’ Harry paused. After a minute or two he went on. ‘As you know, I was reported “Missing, believed killed”. I changed my name, came to this island and lived a life without feeling. Then one day I was taking some people up the river, and one of them — a small, thin man with a beard — looked at me as if he had seen a ghost. I learned that his name was Carton and he worked for De Beers in Kimberley, checking diamonds. I took my gun, followed him to his home and forced him to tell me everything he knew. He had planned part of the robbery and Anita Grünberg was his wife. He had read that I had been killed, so my appearance at the Falls had shocked him badly. It was
then for the first time that I heard of the “Colonel”. It was the Colonel who had planned everything. He had organized both robberies, the theft of the diamonds from De Beers and from us. But it seems that Anita Grünberg had not passed on all of our diamonds to the Colonel. Carton had chosen the best for her to keep.

‘The stones she had kept were of such colour and quality that experts at De Beers would know at once they had not been mined by De Beers. My name could be cleared of that robbery. Carton thought that Anita Grünberg, or Nadina, as she now called herself, would return the diamonds and reveal the identity of the Colonel for a large sum of money. He said he would send her a telegram immediately to explain that I had discovered what they had done.

‘I did not trust Carton – and I was right. He sailed for England on the Kilmorden Castle. You know that I followed him and I was there when he went into a house-agent in Knightsbridge. Then Anita Grünberg walked in. Nadina – whatever you like to call her. She was almost as beautiful as ever – and just as cruel. I hated her so much! The woman who had ruined my life – and who had been the reason my friend took the risks that got him killed. At that minute I could have put my hands round her neck and killed her! She did not show that she knew Carton in any way, yet I was sure their meeting was planned.

‘I followed them along Knightsbridge. Nadina went into the Hyde Park Hotel restaurant. I followed Carton, hoping that he was going to get the diamonds. And then, you know what happened. In the Tube, at the sudden shock of seeing a man whom he imagined to be far away in South Africa, he stepped back upon the line.’

He stopped. There was a difficult silence.
‘Anne, I did go back to the Hyde Park Hotel and follow Nadina to Marlow. I went into that house after her with thoughts of murder — but she was already dead by the time I got there! It was terrible. Dead — and I was not more than three minutes behind her. What a fool I had been to walk into the trap so easily! I had become the only suspect for the murder! For the second time I became the Colonel’s victim.

‘I hid until I had the idea of fooling Sir Eustace Pedler into taking me on the Kilmorden Castle as his secretary. Sir Eustace’s house had been the meeting place arranged by Nadina and Carton, so I thought he must be involved somehow.’

‘Do you know,’ I interrupted, ‘that Guy Pagett was in Marlow at the date of the murder?’

‘I thought he was on the French Riviera with Sir Eustace.’

‘He was supposed to be in Florence — but he never went there. I’m certain he was in Marlow, but I can’t prove it.’

‘And to think I never suspected Pagett until he tried to throw you into the sea. The man is a very good actor.’

‘Yes, isn’t he?’

‘That explains why the Mill House at Marlow was chosen. Pagett could probably get in and out without being seen. And how he must have smiled when I joined Sir Eustace — I’m sure Pagett thinks I know where the diamonds are hidden. But I don’t.’

‘Well,’ I said, ‘I do, and I’ll tell you my story now.’
Chapter 26

The thing that surprised Harry most was to discover that all the time the diamonds had been in my possession — or rather in Suzanne’s. It seemed easy to prove that Harry was innocent of the De Beers robbery. But the murder at Marlow stopped him coming out to prove his case. The thing we came back to, again and again, was the Colonel. Was Guy Pagett the Colonel?

‘I would say he was, but for one thing,’ Harry said. ‘Think back, Anne. That night on the Kilmorden, we ran round and found Pagett lying on the deck.’

‘Yet since it became known that you were “the Man in the Brown Suit” he’s been saying it was you who hit him.’

‘Well, suppose that as he woke up, he saw me disappearing? It must have seemed obvious to him that I was the one who had hit him?’

‘Yes,’ I said. ‘But it changes our ideas.’

‘Why was the Mill House chosen for the murder?’ Harry asked. ‘Would the Colonel have made Pagett the scapegoat if I had not appeared?’

‘Then you think he may be innocent?’

‘We have to find out what he was doing in Marlow. If he’s got a reasonable explanation . . .’ Harry suddenly stopped and held up his hand. ‘What’s that?’

I heard it too, the splash of a boat coming towards our island. We stared into the darkness. There was a boat on the water.

‘Quick.’ Harry pulled me back and took down two guns from the wall. ‘Can you load a gun with bullets?’
'Show me how.'

I understood his instructions well enough. We closed the door and Harry stood by the window.

'Who's that?' shouted Harry, as the boat came in. Immediately, bullets flew all around us. Harry shot with his gun again and again. I heard groans and a splash. In the flashes of light from the gunfire I recognized the red-bearded Dutchman. The others were natives.

Harry reached for the second gun. 'More bullets, Anne,' and I did as I was told. More bullets were also coming in at us, and one cut Harry's face slightly. The shots he fired were doing more damage to the enemy. I got the gun ready and he turned to me to take it. Then he held me close and kissed me before he turned to the window to fire again. Suddenly he shouted, 'They're going — they've had enough for the moment. Anne, you beauty! You wonder! As brave as a lion. Black-haired witch! He caught me in his arms and kissed my mouth. 'And now to business,' he said. 'We must get to the boat before they come back, they'll be better organized next time.'

But both of Harry's boats had been cut loose and had drifted away in the river.

'They're coming again,' I said, seeing dark shapes moving out from the other side of the river.

'Yes. See — they've got two boats this time, they're going to land at two different points. We're in a dangerous place, honey. Do you mind?' Harry asked.

'Not with you.'

'Ah, but dying together is not much fun. We will do better than that. Come, Anne, we've got to try a desperate way out of this.'
Hand in hand, we raced across to the other side of the island. There was only a narrow stream of water between the island and the shore here.

'I've got a friend in Livingstone who will help. But we've got to swim across. Can you swim at all? If not, I can get you there. There are too many rocks here for a boat to get near us.'

'I can swim. What's the danger, Harry?' I had seen the look on his face.

'Crocs, that's the trouble.'

'Crocodiles?'

'Yes, but don't think of them — or say your prayers, whichever is best for you.'

So we went into the water. My prayers must have been good, for we got to the shore safely, and climbed up wet and dripping on the bank.

That walk into town was very difficult. Finally, I stopped, unable to move another step. Harry carried me into Livingstone at the first faint light of dawn. How he managed for all that way, I don't know.

Harry's friend, Ned, was a young man who had a shop. He gave us food and hot coffee in a back room and went out to find what had happened to Sir Eustace's party, and if any of them were still at the hotel.

I had been safe while my enemies thought I was dead. Now, wherever I went on my own, they could follow me and murder me quietly. I would have no one to protect me. We agreed that I should join Suzanne, and use all my energy to take care of myself. I would not to try to catch the Colonel. I would wait for instructions from Harry, who planned to go and find Colonel Race and see if he was a friend.
'We ought to have a code,' I said thoughtfully. 'We don't want to be fooled again by messages from our enemies.'

'That's easy.' Harry replied. 'Any real message will have the word “and” crossed out in it. Any telegrams from me will be signed “Andy”.'
Chapter 27

From the diary of Sir Eustace Pedler, Johannesburg, March 6th.

Living here is like living on the edge of a volcano. Crowds of angry people on strike from their work walk the streets and look at you with thoughts of murder. You cannot ride in a taxi — if you do, they pull you out.

Pagett joins me tomorrow like the faithful servant he is. And this morning I was visited by a government official. It seems they were expecting serious trouble.

‘It is not the strikers who are causing the trouble, Sir Eustace,’ he told me. ‘There is some organization at work behind them. A lot of guns have been brought in. From documents we have discovered, we have learned there is a code. It seems vegetables are used to hide the weapons.’

We were interrupted by a telegram being handed to me. I read it with amazement.

‘Anne is safe. Here with me at Kimberley. Suzanne Blair.’

I still don’t understand why that young woman had to walk out of the hotel in the middle of the night to get to Kimberley. There was no train. I don’t suppose she will ever explain. Nobody explains anything to me. It was because of her work as a journalist, I suppose. ‘How I sailed down the Zambezi on a tree,’ perhaps, by our Special Reporter.
Chapter 28

Anne’s Story

As soon as I got to Kimberley I sent a telegram to Suzanne, and she joined me as quickly as she could. I was surprised to find that Suzanne really was fond of me — I thought she was just enjoying me as an entertaining friend for a short time — but she had stayed on at the Falls after I disappeared, hoping I was somewhere nearby. She cried happily when we met.

When we weren’t feeling quite so emotional, I sat down on the bed and told her the whole story.

‘Oh, Anne, dear,’ she said when I had finished. ‘How do you know that this young man of yours is telling the truth? You believe every word he says.’

‘Of course I do,’ I cried.

‘But I don’t see anything at all, except his good looks,’ Suzanne smiled, ‘and his wild behaviour, just like in those adventure stories you love so much.’

I quickly turned the conversation to Sir Eustace.

‘I heard from Pagett before I left the Falls,’ Suzanne said. ‘He’s leaving Cape Town today to join Sir Eustace in Johannesburg.’

‘Good,’ I said. ‘I will meet his train here.’ I wanted to see Pagett as soon as possible, and this was my best chance. We decided that I should go alone. Pagett would be less willing to speak in front of the two of us.

According to the hotel porter, Pagett’s train would stop at Kimberley at 5.40 on the following afternoon, though he did not think it would get through to Johannesburg. He was sure the line had been blown up by a bomb, he told me cheerfully!

I was waiting at the station when the train arrived. Everybody jumped out and began walking up and down. I saw Pagett, and
he immediately became nervous. 'Dear me, Miss Beddingfeld, I thought you had disappeared.'

'I have reappeared, Mr Pagett, with something important to ask you. What were you doing at Marlow on 8th January?'

He jumped violently. 'Really, Miss Beddingfeld -'

'You were there!'

'I - I was, yes.'

'Won't you tell me why?'

'Hasn’t Sir Eustace already told you?'

'Sir Eustace? Does he know?'

'I am almost sure he does. I hoped he had not recognized me, but from things he has said, I fear he did. In any case, I mean to explain the matter and offer to leave my job.'

A whistle blew, and the people began to climb back into the train.

'Mr Pagett, why did you go to Marlow?'

'It was wrong of me, but natural.'

'What was natural?' I cried.

He was back in the train now, leaning down to speak to me. And in three short sentences he told me. At last I knew Pagett’s secret! It was not at all what I had expected.

I walked slowly back to the hotel. There, a telegram was given to me. It contained full and clear instructions for me to go to a station this side of Johannesburg, where I would be met by a driver. It was signed, not Andy, but Harry.

I sat down to do some very serious thinking.
Chapter 29

When I arrived at my destination the following morning, I was met by a short, black-bearded Dutchman. There was a sound like thunder in the distance, and I asked him what it was.

‘Guns,’ he answered. So there was fighting in Johannesburg!

We drove into the edge of the city and every minute the sound of guns came nearer. At last we stopped at a house. A native boy opened the door and my driver asked me to enter.

In the hall, the man passed me and opened a door. ‘The young lady to see Mr Harry Rayburn,’ he said, and laughed.

I went in. A man sat writing behind a desk. He looked up.

‘Dear me,’ he said, ‘Miss Beddingfeld! How careless to be fooled a second time!’

‘Am I talking to Mr Chichester, or Miss Pettigrew?’ I asked.

‘You really are wonderful at make-up. All the time you were Miss Pettigrew, I never recognized you.’

My behaviour obviously surprised him.

‘Both characters are gone, for the moment. Please sit down.’

I did.

‘We must get to business. You . . .’

‘Let me stop you from wasting your time,’ I said. ‘I never do business with anyone but the man in charge.’

Mr Chichester-Pettigrew opened his mouth – but could not reply.

I smiled brightly. He did not like it at all.

‘You would be wise, young lady . . .’

I interrupted him. ‘You will save a lot of time and trouble by taking me straight to Sir Eustace Pedler.’

‘To . . .’

He was shocked.
'Yes,' I said. 'Sir Eustace Pedler.'

'I - I -'

He ran from the room. I used this moment to settle my hat at a more charming angle. Then my enemy returned and said, respectfully, 'Will you come this way, Miss Beddingfeld?'

I followed him up the stairs. He knocked at a door. A quick 'Come in' came from the room, and I went inside. Sir Eustace Pedler jumped up to greet me, cheerful and smiling. 'Well, well, Miss Anne.' He shook my hand. 'I'm delighted to see you. Come and sit down. Not tired after your journey? That's good.'

He sat down facing me, still smiling. 'You were right to come straight to me. Minks, who you saw downstairs, is a clever actor - but a fool. So let us get to the facts. How long have you known I was the Colonel?'

'Since Mr Pagett told me he had seen you in Marlow when you were supposed to be in the French Riviera.'

Sir Eustace nodded thoughtfully. 'Yes, the fool. He ruined everything by telling you that. He kept his family secret because a personal secretary is not supposed to have a wife - they get in the way of work. He was so worried that I might have recognized him that he never questioned what I was doing there. But that's just the kind of secret a man like Pagett would have - a wife and four children in a little house in Marlow. My bad luck! I had arranged everything so carefully too. I sent him to Florence and told the hotel in the Riviera that I was travelling for a night or two. Then, by the time the murder was discovered, I was back again in the Riviera, with nobody knowing I had ever left.'

'Then it was you who tried to throw me overboard on the Kilmorden,' I said.

He shrugged. 'I apologize, my dear child. I always liked you - but I could not have my plans destroyed by a little girl.'
‘There is one thing I would like to know,’ I said. ‘How did you manage to get Pagett to hire Miss Pettigrew?’

‘Oh, that was simple. She met Pagett in the doorway of the Trade Commissioner’s office, told him I had telephoned, and that she had been chosen by the department to be my secretary.’

‘You’re very honest,’ I said, studying him.

‘There’s no reason why I should not be.’

I did not like that.

‘This was going to be my last job — to supply explosives and weapons to the strikers in Johannesburg and make sure that certain people were blamed. And I was careful to be paid in advance.’

‘Ah!’ I said slowly. ‘But what about me?’

‘That’s just it,’ said Sir Eustace softly. ‘What am I going to do with you? The simplest way of dealing with you — and, I may add, the most pleasant for me — is marriage. In law, wives cannot speak against their husbands. And I’d like a pretty young wife to hold my hand and look at me with bright eyes — don’t flash them at me so! You frighten me. Don’t you like that plan?’

‘I do not.’

Sir Eustace sighed. ‘The usual trouble, I suppose. You love someone else.’

‘I do love someone else.’

‘I thought as much,’ said this extraordinary person, leaning back in his chair, ‘The fact is, I do like you. I really don’t want to do anything terrible. Suppose you tell me the whole story. But be warned — I want the truth.’

I was not going to make that mistake. I had great respect for Sir Eustace’s intelligence. I told him the whole story, up to my rescue at Victoria Falls by Harry.

‘Wise girl,’ he said in approval. ‘You have told the truth. You’ve had amazing luck, of course, but sooner or later the
amateur meets the professional. I am the professional, and I never made the mistake of trying to do my jobs myself. Always employ the expert — that is my principle. The one time I did not follow that, I failed — but I couldn’t trust anyone to kill Nadina for me. She knew too much. Once Nadina was dead and the diamonds were in my possession, I was safe from her threats to sell my identity. But I made a mess of the job. That idiot Pagett, with his wife and family! My fault — I found it amusing to employ the fellow. There is a lesson for you, Anne. In business, don’t enjoy your sense of humour too much. Now then, speaking of business, where are the diamonds?’

‘Harry Rayburn has them.’

He kept his smile. ‘I want those diamonds.’

‘I don’t see much chance of you getting them,’ I replied.

‘I don’t want to be unpleasant, but you should know that a dead girl found in this city will cause no surprise. Your only chance is this: you write to Harry Rayburn, telling him to join you here and bring the diamonds with him . . .’

‘I will not.’

‘Don’t interrupt me. I will take the diamonds in exchange for your life.’

‘And Harry?’

‘He will go free too.’

‘And how do I know you will keep your promise?’

‘You do not, my dear girl. You have to trust me and hope for the best.’

This was what I had been trying for. I was careful not to jump at the chance too soon. Gradually I allowed myself to be forced into obeying. I wrote what Sir Eustace demanded.

When I had finished, he read it through. ‘That seems all right. Now the address.’
I gave it to him. He hit the bell on the table. Chichester-
Pettigrew – that is, Minks – came in.
‘This letter is to go immediately – the usual route.’
‘Very well, Colonel.’
‘May I ask you a few questions, Sir Eustace,’ I said, as
Chichester-Pettigrew left the room.
‘Certainly, Anne!’
‘Why did you accept Harry as your secretary, instead of
taking him to the police?’
‘I wanted those diamonds, but Nadina was threatening to
sell them to your Harry. That was another mistake I made – I
thought she would have them with her that day in Marlow.
But she was too clever. Carton, her husband, was dead too –
and I had no idea where the diamonds were hidden. Then I
managed to get a copy of a wireless message sent to Nadina
by Carton from the Kilmorden – “Seventeen one twenty
two”. Carton must have given that piece of paper you picked
up to the wireless operator, because it was the same mistake
– “seventeen” instead of “seventy-one”. I decided it was an
appointment. When Harry was so determined to get aboard the
Kilmorden I pretended to believe him. I was hoping to learn
where the diamonds were hidden. When Harry set out to keep
the appointment that night, Minks was sent to watch him. But
Minks made a complete mess of it by stabbing him. Now, my
dear Anne, I have other business I must deal with. Let me show
you your room.’

He took me to a small room and a native boy brought up my
suitcase. Sir Eustace was acting like a very kind host. I must ask
for anything I wanted, he said, before he locked me in my prison.
A bowl of hot water was on the washstand, so I unpacked the
things I needed. Something hard and unfamiliar in my wash-bag puzzled me. To my utter amazement, I drew out a small gun. It hadn’t been there when I started from Kimberley. It was a useful thing to have in a house such as this. But modern clothes are not suited to carrying guns. In the end I pushed it carefully into the top of my stocking. It really seemed the only place.
Later that afternoon I was taken down to Sir Eustace. He was delighted.

'Your young man will be here soon. So now I have you both where I want you.'

There was the sound of feet on the stairs. The door opened, and Harry was pushed into the room by two men. Sir Eustace looked at me with complete satisfaction.

'According to plan,' he said softly. 'You amateurs always try to compete against professionals.' He turned to Harry. 'My dear Rayburn, you are extraordinarily unlucky. This is — let me think, our third battle.'

'Yes,' said Harry. 'You have beaten me twice. Don’t you know, luck changes the third time? You see, I got hold of Minks in Johannesburg and had a good long talk with him about going to prison. He decided he’d prefer to give me some help. So this time I win — show him, Anne.'

In a flash I had the gun out of my stocking and held it to Sir Eustace’s head. The two men guarding Harry rushed forward, but Harry stopped them.

'Another step, and he dies! If they come any nearer, Anne, shoot!

'I will,' I replied cheerfully. 'I rather think I might shoot him anyway.'

This frightened Sir Eustace. He was, in fact, shaking. 'Stay where you are,' he commanded.

'Tell them to leave the room,' said Harry, pointing to the guards.

Sir Eustace gave the order. The men left, and Harry locked the door.
'Now we can talk,' he said. Coming across the room, he took the gun out of my hand. Sir Eustace sighed in relief. ‘That’s better. Well, my young friend, let us talk sense. For the moment you are in control. But the house is full of my men. Your situation is hopeless . . .’

‘Is it? Sit down, Sir Eustace, and listen!’

There was a banging at the door below. There were shouts, then gunfire. Sir Eustace went pale. ‘What’s that?’

‘Colonel Race and his people, Sir Eustace. Anne knew your telegram was not from me. She caught you in your own trap. Before leaving Kimberley she sent telegrams to me and to Race. Mrs Blair has been in contact with us ever since. So you see, Sir Eustace, you are beaten.’

Sir Eustace accepted his defeat with laughter.

There was a crash of wood as the front door was broken, and the sound of footsteps running up the stairs. Harry unlocked the door. Colonel Race was the first to enter the room. He was delighted to see us. ‘You’re safe, Anne. I was afraid —’ He turned to Sir Eustace. ‘I’ve been after you for a long time, Pedler — and at last I’ve got you.’
Chapter 31

That night our place of safety was a farm about twenty miles from Johannesburg. I kept telling myself that our troubles were over. Harry and I were together and we would never be separated again. Yet I was aware that he was somehow holding himself back, which I could not understand.

I came out on to the verandah early the following morning and looked across the plain towards Johannesburg. I could see the big hills of waste rock from the mines, shining in the pale sunshine, and I could hear the distant thunder of guns. The farmer’s wife came out and called me in to breakfast. Harry had left early that morning and had not yet returned, she told me. Again I felt uneasy.

After breakfast I sat outside, so lost in my own thoughts that I didn’t see Colonel Race ride up and get off his horse. It was not until he said, ‘Good morning, Anne,’ that I realized he was there.

‘Oh,’ I said, ‘it’s you. Please sit down. What is the news?’

‘Prime Minister Smuts will be in Johannesburg tomorrow. I give this revolution three days more before it collapses. In the meantime the fighting goes on. But I have other news. I’m afraid I have failed. Sir Eustace has escaped.’

‘What?’

‘No one knows how he managed it. He was securely locked up for the night – in an upstairs room of one of the farms near here which the military have taken over, but this morning the room was empty.’

Secretly, I was rather pleased. I always had a liking for Sir Eustace. I’m sure it is wrong of me, but I admired him. He was thoroughly bad, but I have never met anyone half so amusing.
I hid my feelings, of course. Colonel Race would feel differently about it.

‘And apart from the paperwork, Harry is now cleared of all crimes. There is no reason why he should not use his real name.’

Then Harry came round the corner of the house. Colonel Race got up.

‘Good morning – Lucas.’

For some reason Harry blushed.

‘Yes,’ I said happily, ‘you must be known by your real name now.’

But Harry was still staring at Colonel Race.

‘So you know, sir,’ he said at last.

‘I never forget a face. I saw you once as a boy.’

‘What’s all this about?’ I asked, puzzled, looking from one to the other. They seemed to be testing each other somehow. Race won. Harry turned slightly away.

‘I suppose you’re right, sir. Tell her my real name.’

‘Anne, this isn’t Harry Lucas. Harry Lucas was killed in the War. This is John Harold Eardsley.’
Chapter 32

With those words, Colonel Race left. I stood, staring after him, until Harry spoke. ‘Anne, forgive me.’ He took my hand.

‘Why did you not tell me the truth?’

‘I was afraid. I wanted you to love me for myself – for the man I was – without the wealth.’

‘You mean you didn’t trust me?’

‘You can put it that way if you like. I’d become bitter, always believing I would be cheated – and it was so wonderful to be loved in the way you loved me.’

‘I see,’ I said slowly. ‘How did it happen?’

‘Lucas and I were ruined and it turned us mad. We went rushing into danger without thought. One night we exchanged our identity discs, for luck! Lucas was killed the next day – blown to pieces.’

I shivered. ‘But why didn’t you tell me this morning? You must know that I love you by now!’

‘Anne, I didn’t want to spoil it all. I wanted to take you back to the island. What’s the good of money? It can’t buy happiness. We’d have been happy on the island. I’m afraid of that other life – it nearly destroyed me once.’

‘And your father’s millions?’

‘Race was welcome to have the money. Anyway, he would make better use of it than I ever would. Anne, what are you thinking about? You’re frowning a lot.’

‘I’m thinking,’ I said slowly, ‘that I almost wish Colonel Race hadn’t made you tell me.’

‘No. He was right. I owed you the truth.’

I laughed. ‘Harry, it’s you I want – and that’s all that matters.’
As soon as possible we set out for Cape Town. There Suzanne was waiting to welcome me. When the fighting was finally over, Colonel Race came down to Cape Town. At his suggestion the big house at Muizenberg that had belonged to Sir Laurence Eardsley was reopened.

There we made our plans. I would return to England with Suzanne and be married in London. Everything for the wedding would be bought in Paris! Suzanne enjoyed planning these details, and so did I. Yet the future seemed strangely unreal. And sometimes I felt as though I could not breathe.

It was the night before we were to sail. I could not sleep. I was unhappy, I hated leaving Africa. Then I was surprised by a knock on the window. I jumped up. Harry was on the verandah outside. ‘Put some clothes on, Anne, and come out. I want to speak to you.’

I stepped out into the cool night air that smelled of flowers and that special smell that is Africa. Harry’s face looked pale and determined and his eyes were bright. ‘Anne,’ He caught me in his arms. ‘Anne, come away with me – now – tonight. Back to Rhodesia – back to the island. I can’t stand all this foolishness. I can’t wait for you any longer.’

‘What about my French dresses?’ I demanded.

To this day, Harry never knows when I am serious, and when I am only having fun with him.

‘I don’t care about your French dresses. I’m not going to let you go, do you hear? You’re my woman. You’re coming with me now – tonight – and damn everybody.’

He held me to him, kissing me until I could hardly breathe.
Chapter 33

That was two years ago. We still live on the island. Our son is lying in the sun, kicking his legs. There’s a ‘man in a brown suit’ if you like. He’s wearing as little as possible, which is the best costume for Africa, and he’s beautifully brown. In front of me, on the rough wooden table, is the letter from Suzanne.

Dear Mad People in Love – this idea of giving up a fortune is just another madness. Colonel Race wanted to convince you to take your money, but I persuaded him to let you decide in time. He can look after everything for Harry – and nobody would do it better. Because, after all, honeymoons don’t last forever. One day you will begin to dream of a house in London, wonderful fur coats, Paris dresses, and the most modern things for babies! Oh, yes, you will!

But have your honeymoon, my dear friends, and let it be a long one.

Your loving friend,
Suzanne Blair

There is another letter that I sometimes read. It came a long time after the other, and with it was a parcel. It appeared to be written from Bolivia.
My dear Anne Beddingfeld,

I simply had to write to you, not so much for the pleasure it gives me, as for the great pleasure I know it will give you to hear from me. Our friend Race wasn’t quite as clever as he thought himself, was he?

I’m sending you my diary. I think that there is much in it which may amuse you. Make use of it in any way you like.

I have no bad feelings for you. It is hard, of course, to have to begin all over again at my time of life, but I had some money saved up—and I am getting together a nice little business.

On the whole I think I have been very forgiving. Even to Pagett. I heard that he—or rather Mrs Pagett—has brought another child into the world. England will be completely populated by Pagetts soon. I sent the child a silver cup, and, on a postcard, wrote how delighted I would be to act as godfather. I can see Pagett taking both cup and postcard straight to Scotland Yard without a smile on his face!

Bless you, bright eyes. Some day you will see what a mistake you have made in not marrying me.

Yours ever

Eustace Pedler
Character List

Anne Beddingfeld: a young woman

Professor Beddingfeld: Anne's father, who is famous in the scientific world – one of England's greatest experts on Primitive Man

Sir Eustace Pedler: a Member of Parliament and very rich – who has business in Rhodesia

Guy Pagett: personal secretary to Sir Eustace Pedler

Harry Rayburn: second secretary to Sir Eustace Pedler

Mrs Suzanne Blair: a fashionable woman

Colonel Race: famous big-game hunter who often travels to Africa – he is believed to be involved with the British Secret Service

The "Colonel": leader of a large gang of international criminals

John Eardsley: a young adventurer searching for diamonds – his greatest friend is Harry Lucas

Harry Lucas: young adventurer searching for diamonds – became the best friend of John Eardsley when they met at Cambridge University

Sir Laurence Eardsley: very rich and very important after making a fortune from South African gold mines – John is his son

Miss Pettigrew: a secretary employed by Sir Eustace Pedler in South Africa

Anita Grünberg: a mysterious actress, born in South Africa but her mother was Hungarian
Character list

Lord Nasby: the millionaire owner of the *Daily Budget* newspaper

Madame Nadina: a famous Russian dancer

Mr Flemming: Professor Bedingfeld's lawyer

L. B. Carton: a visitor from South Africa

Mrs James: looks after the Mill House, which belongs to Sir Eustace Pedler

Augustus Milray: an important man in British diplomatic affairs

General Smuts: the Prime Minister of South Africa

The Rev. Edward Chichester: a person working in Christian churches abroad
Cultural notes

South Africa in the early 1920s
In what was then known as the Union of South Africa in the 1920s, the majority of the white population, roughly 21.5% of the total, were descended from the Dutch who began settling there in the 17th century. They were known as Afrikaners. A minority of whites were of British descent and although South Africa was part of the British Empire, it was self-governing. General Jan Smuts, an Afrikaner, was Prime Minister.

In 1922 white coalmine and goldmine workers went on strike. They believed that the mine owners intended to hire black workers because they did not need to pay them as much as white workers. Violence followed and Prime Minister Smuts sent in soldiers to end it, causing more deaths. Throughout this time conspiracies against the South African Government and terrorist acts were common.

Kimberley and the diamond trade in South Africa
Diamonds were discovered in the mid 19th century on the banks of the Orange River in South Africa. This caused a rapid expansion of mining, with the town of Kimberley at its centre. In the late 1880s the De Beers company was formed and remains today the largest international diamond producer and trader.

Cape Town
Cape Town is the second city of South Africa (Johannesburg is the largest city). It is situated on the south-west tip of the continent of Africa, and was founded in the 17th century as a supply station for ships travelling to India and the East. Its most famous landmark is Table Mountain – so called because it has a flat top, like a table. The Mount Nelson Hotel in the story is still one of the best hotels in the city today. It was built in 1899 and became the favourite hotel for travellers in the early part of the 20th century.
Muizenberg
This is a beach-side suburb of Cape Town, about 20 miles south of the city. It is situated where the shore of the Cape Peninsula curves round to the east on the False Bay coast. It is considered to be the birthplace of surfing in South Africa, and Agatha Christie was one of the first Britons to participate in the sport – just as Anne Beddingfeld did in the story.

The British class system
At the time when The Man in the Brown Suit was written in 1924, Britain had a distinct class system with rules that everybody knew and followed. The upper classes consisted of two groups. The first, the nobility, had titles: they were Dukes, Marquesses, Earls, Viscounts and Barons. Lord Nasby, for example, was probably a baron. They were addressed as my Lord and my Lady, your lordship, your ladyship. They owned land, had a lot of power and did not usually work for a living unless they were involved in politics, diplomacy or the military as very senior officers.

The second part of the upper classes, the landed gentry, had titles such as Baronet and Knight – Sir Eustace Pedler is a Knight.

The middle classes were educated people who had to work for a living – they had professions in the law, medicine, education, business, the Church or, like Professor Beddingfeld, archaeology, or something similar.

Sea travel
The period between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of World War II (1939) is considered to be the “golden age” of ocean liners. At this time sea travel was the main means of transport when journeying to other continents, whether it was for pleasure, business or emigration. Wealthy passengers had the best accommodation in first class, with large, comfortable cabins on the upper decks of the ships – the lower down you went, the cheaper the cabin. Third-class passengers might have to share with five other people.
The cost of Anne’s first class ticket (£87) would be the equivalent today of approximately £4000.

**Captain’s table**
The ship’s captain would regularly invite certain passengers to have dinner with him – these would usually be important people, perhaps politicians, members of the aristocracy, or celebrities. Dining with the ship’s captain was considered a privilege, and there was usually much competition to get an invitation.

**Fancy dress**
Sea voyages took many days to reach South Africa. Entertainment for passengers was organised, and among these would be fancy dress parties, where people would wear costumes representing fantasy figures, historical characters, animals, etc. Sir Eustace dresses up as a teddy bear – the familiar toy bear that many children have. Anne dresses as a gipsy.

**Gipsy girl**
In the 1920s, just after World War 1 and the deaths of so many young men, there was a feeling that life was short and had to be enjoyed. Anne’s eagerness to look for adventure and to travel with very little money is a part of this. Mrs Blair admires her attitude and calls her ‘gipsy girl’ because gipsies constantly travelled and were considered exotic and romantic by some people.

**Superstition about number 13**
In Britain, the number 13 is considered unlucky, so people will avoid having a house number 13, or sitting in seat number 13. In other countries different numbers are considered unlucky, for example in Japan it is the number 4, and in Italy it is the number 17, which are both associated with death.

**Telegram/wireless message**
In the 1920s radio or wireless communication was very new. On land, the telegraph system was used to send telegrams. The signal was sent through
wires usually strung alongside railway lines. At sea, wireless messages were sent using radio waves. Both methods used Morse code (a system of dots and dashes representing letters of the alphabet and numbers).

Marlow
A town on the river Thames to the west of London.

French Riviera
This is the area of the south coast of France that became a very fashionable holiday location for the British aristocracy and upper classes in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Monte Carlo, Cannes and Nice are important towns in the area, where luxurious hotels were built for these tourists.

The War
At the time of writing, this referred to what we now call World War I, or the First World War, that took place between 1914 and 1918. Britain, France and Russia fought against Germany. Many millions of soldiers and civilians died throughout Europe.

Archaeology
This is the study of societies and people of the past. Archaeologists dig up and examine the remains of the things that people have left behind to learn more about how they used to live. These items are usually the remains of buildings, tools, weapons and cooking utensils.
absent-minded (adj)
someone who forgets things and doesn’t pay attention to what they are doing

absorbed (adj)
very interested in something, with it taking up all your attention and energy

affair (n)
an event or series of events, an important or interesting situation

alibi (n)
something that proves you were in a different place when a crime happened; a reason why you can’t be guilty of a crime

amateur (n)
someone who does something as a hobby and not as a job; not an expert

arrest (v)
when the police arrest someone, they take charge of them and take them to a police station because they believe they may have committed a crime

astonished (adj)
very surprised about something

attic (n)
a room at the top of a house, just below the roof
bandage (n)
a long thin strip of cloth which is wrapped around a wounded part of someone's body to protect or support it

bathing pavilion (n)
a building where people used to change their clothes when they were going swimming in the sea

betrayal (n)
an action which hurts or disappoints someone who loves and trusts you

big-game (adj)
large wild animals such as lions or elephants, hunted by people for sport

bothered by (v)
interrupted by another person or people when you don’t want to speak to anyone

British Guiana (n)
the name of the British colony on the northern coast of South America, now the independent nation of Guyana

butler (n)
the most important male servant in a wealthy house

calling card (n)
used in the past as a way to introduce yourself to a person; a small card showing your name and perhaps your official stamp

cannot be bothered with (v)
to not want to worry about details, not wanting to do something which doesn’t interest you

cave (n)
a large hole in the side of a cliff or hill, or one that is under the ground
chaperone (n)
someone who accompanies another person to a place, to make sure that he or she is safe there

cheat (v)
to treat someone unfairly

cue (n)
something that helps you find the answer to a puzzle or mystery

code (n)
a system of replacing words in a message with other words or symbols so that nobody can understand it unless they know the system

coincidence (n)
a situation in which two or more similar or related events occur at the same time and without any planning

coroner (n)
an official person who is responsible for investigating the deaths of people who have died in a sudden, violent or unusual way

cruel (adj)
someone who deliberately causes pain or distress to people or animals

curator (n)
someone who is in charge of the objects or works of art in a museum or art gallery

debt (n)
owing someone something, usually money, but also expressing gratitude for something that another person has done for you

ded (n)
the top part of a ship which forms a floor in the open air that you can walk on
Detective Inspector (n)
a person in the police force whose job is to discover what has happened in a crime or other situation, and to find the people involved

dignified (adj)
a person or action that is calm, impressive, and worthy of respect

dismiss (v)
to tell an employee that they are no longer needed to do the job they have been doing

drawing-room (n)
a formal term for a large room in a wealthy or important house, where people sit and relax

dressing-gown (n)
a long, loose item of clothing which you wear over pyjamas or a nightdress when you are not in bed

deny (v)
to wish you could have the same thing or quality that someone else has

espionage (n)
the activity of finding out the political, military or industrial secrets of your enemies or rivals using spies

evidence (n)
something you see, experience, read or are told, that makes you believe something is true or really happened. Evidence is needed to prove who committed a crime.

faint (v)
to lose consciousness for a short time

faint (adj)
to have very little strength, power or intensity
fellow (n)  
an informal, old-fashioned term for a friend, used by one man to another man

formality (n)  
an action or procedure that is usually carried out as part of an activity or event, such as paperwork

funeral (n)  
the ceremony that is held when the body of someone who has died is buried or cremated

give evidence (v)  
to officially say what you know about people or events in a court of law

gipsy (n)  
a member of a race of people who travel from place to place, usually in caravans

get hold of (v)  
to find a person you want to speak to

get rid of (v)  
to take action so that you no longer have something that you don’t want or don’t like

glance (v)  
to look at something or someone quickly, then look away again

glue (n)  
a sticky substance used for joining things together

gorge (n)  
a deep, narrow valley with very steep sides, usually where a river passes through mountains
growl (n)
a low, rumbling sound made by an animal when it is angry

hang (v)
to kill a person, as punishment for a crime, by tying a rope around their neck and removing the support from under their feet

hang on to (v)
to keep something

Harem (n)
in some Muslim societies, a part of a rich man’s house where the women lived, or a term for the group of women who lived there

honeymoon (n)
a holiday taken by a man and woman who have just got married

host (n)
the person at a party who has invited all the people and provided the food, drink or entertainment

hunted (adj)
a person or animal that other people are searching for is hunted

identity disc (n)
an official badge with information about who a person is, used by soldiers

industrial (adj)
used to describe things which relate to or are used in industry, factories or the production of goods. Industrial action is action taken by workers when they are unhappy with their pay or working conditions

innocent (adj)
if someone is innocent, they did not commit a crime which they have been accused of

inquest (n)
an official inquiry into the cause of someone’s death
jaw (n)
the lower part of your face below your mouth, forming the outline of the bottom of your face

jury (n)
the group of people who have been chosen from the general public to listen to the facts about a crime and decide whether the person accused is guilty or not

marvellous (adj)
something or someone who is wonderful, amazing or very good

mine (n)
a place where deep holes are dug under the ground in order to get a mineral such as coal, diamonds or gold

mothball (n)
a small, white ball made of a special chemical, which you can put amongst clothes or blankets to keep moths away

MP (n)
a person who has been elected to represent the people from a particular area in the Houses of Commons; an abbreviation for ‘Member of Parliament’

native (adj)
someone who is a native of a country was born and brought up in that country

nod (n)
to bend your head once in a particular direction to give someone a signal to do something or go somewhere

offensive (adj)
behaving in a way that upsets or embarrasses other people
opponent (n)
a person who is working against you; your enemy

overboard (adv)
to go over the side of a ship into the water

overdraft (n)
an amount of money you owe to the bank because you have spent more than you have in your account

Palaeolithic (n)
from or connected with the early part of the Stone Age

passionate (adj)
a passionate person is someone who has very strong feelings about something or someone, or who has a strong belief in something

peril (n)
a great danger or problem

pneumonia (n)
a serious disease which affects your lungs and makes it difficult for you to breathe

poisoner (n)
someone who has killed or harmed another person by using poison

precious (adj)
something which is important and which you don’t want to lose

prehistoric (adj)
people and things which existed at a time before information was written down

pride (n)
a feeling of satisfaction which you have because you have done, or possess, something good and important; a feeling of dignity and self-respect
Glossary

**Primitive Man (n)**
human beings who lived in a very early period in the development of the human race

**punch (n)**
a hard blow with your fist

**race (n)**
one of the major groups which human beings can be divided into according to their physical features, such as skin colour

**Reverend (n)**
a title used before the name or rank of an officially appointed religious leader

**revolution (n)**
a successful attempt by a large group of people to change the political system of their country by force

**ruin (v)**
if someone or something ruins you it causes you to lose all your money

**savage (adj)**
v Violent and uncontrolled

**shelter (n)**
to give someone protection from danger

**ship’s purser (n)**
a person on a ship who deals with official papers and who is responsible for the welfare of the passengers

**shudder (v)**
to shake with disgust, horror or fear

**splendid (adj)**
very good, or very beautiful
spoil (v)
to stop things from being successful or satisfactory

stab (v)
to push a knife or sharp object into someone's body

startled (adj)
surprised by something sudden and unexpected

steward/stewardess (n)
a man/woman who works on a ship, plane or train, looking after passengers and serving meals to them

stocking (n)
an item of women's clothing which fits closely over their feet and legs, usually made of nylon or silk

strangle (v)
kill someone by squeezing their throat so tightly that they are unable to breathe

substantial (adj)
large in amount or degree; important and impressive

suicide (n)
people who commit suicide deliberately kill themselves because they do not want to continue living

superstition (n)
belief in things which are not real, such as magic; an irrational fear or belief which isn't based on fact

surgeon (n)
a doctor who is specially trained to perform operations

suspect (v)
to think or believe that a person has done something unpleasant or dishonest
Table Mountain (n)
a mountain overlooking Cape Town, South Africa, which appears to be flat at the peak like a table

telegram (n)
a message that is sent by telegraph (a system of sending messages over long distances) and then printed and delivered to someone's home or office (see Cultural notes)

tin container (n)
a box or jar made from tin, a soft, silvery-white metal, used to carry objects safely

thrilling (adj)
very exciting and enjoyable

(the) Tube (n)
the underground railway system in London

ventilator (n)
a device which lets fresh air into a room or building and lets stale, old air out

verandah (n)
an area like a large balcony around the outside of the ground floor of a building, usually with a roof and open at the front

verdict (n)
a decision made in a court of law, given by the judge or jury at the end of a trial

wireless message (n)
a message sent over a long distance using radio signals (see Cultural notes)

witch (n)
a woman who has magic powers
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The Mysterious Affair at Styles

Recently, there have been some strange things happening at Styles, a large country house in Essex. Evelyn Howard, a loyal friend to the family for years, leaves the house after an argument with Mrs Inglethorp. Mrs Inglethorp then suddenly falls ill and dies. Has she been poisoned? It is up to the famous Belgian detective, Hercule Poirot, to find out what happened.

Peril at End House

Hercule Poirot is on holiday in the south of England when he meets a young woman called Nick Buckley. Nick has had a lot of mysterious ‘accidents’. First, her car brakes failed. Then, a large rock just missed her when she was walking, and later, a painting almost fell on her while she was asleep. Finally, Poirot finds a bullet hole in her hat! Nick is in danger and needs Poirot’s help. Can he find the guilty person before Nick is harmed?

Why Didn’t They Ask Evans?

Bobby Jones is playing golf . . . terribly. As his ball disappears over the edge of a cliff, he hears a cry. The ball is lost, but on the rocks below he finds a dying man. With his final breath the man opens his eyes and says, ‘Why didn’t they ask Evans?’ Bobby and his adventure-seeking friend Lady Frances, set out to solve the mystery of the dying man’s last words, but put their own lives in terrible danger . . .
Death in the Clouds

Hercule Poirot is travelling from France to England by plane. During the journey a passenger is murdered. Someone on the flight is guilty of the crime – but who could have a reason to kill an elderly lady? And how is it possible that no one saw it happen?

Appointment with Death

Mrs Boynton, cruel and hated by her family, is found dead while on holiday in the ancient city of Petra in Jordan. Was it just a weak heart and too much sun that killed her, or was she murdered? By chance, Hercule Poirot is visiting the country. He has 24 hours to solve the case.

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