

DORCAS / POIROT

DORCAS:

Begging your pardon. I heard voices.

POIROT:

But come in! Just the person I was hoping to speak with. You hold the key to this important matter.

DORCAS:

Thank you, sir...?

POIROT:

You have been with your mistress many years, is it not so?

DORCAS:

She was a very good mistress to me, sir.

POIROT:

My good Dorcas, it is necessary that we should know all—if we are to avenge her and bring the murderer to justice. Your mistress had a quarrel yesterday afternoon?

DORCAS:

I didn't exactly mean to listen, but—I happened to be going along the hall and the mistress was speaking very sharp, and I heard her say, 'You owe everything to me! And you now you lie to me?' I didn't hear what Alfred said, but she went on: 'You need not think that any fear of publicity, or scandal between husband and wife will deter me.' Then I thought I heard them coming out, so I went off quickly.

POIROT:

You are sure it was Alfred's voice you heard?

DORCAS:

Oh, yes, sir, whose else's could it be? At five o'clock, Mrs. Emily rang the bell. She was looking dreadful. She had something in her hand. A letter or a piece of paper, but she kept staring at it and she whispered: 'These few words—and everything's changed.' And then she says to me: 'Never trust a man, Dorcas!' But then, Mrs. Mary came in, so she didn't say any more.

POIROT:

That letter. What did she do with it?

DORCAS:

Well, I don't know, sir, I expect she would lock it up in that purple case of hers.

(Dorcas/Poirot)

POIROT:

Ah. You are such help! Now I one last *détail*. The saucepan in Emily's room. There is some cocoa in it. Did she have that every night?

DORCAS:

Yes, sir. Plain cocoa, made with milk, a teaspoonful of sugar, and two teaspoonfuls of rum.

POIROT:

Who took it to her room?

DORCAS:

I did, sir. There's not much room on the stove, so cook makes it early. Then I bring it up, and put it on the table by the door, and take it into her room later. She warmed it up whenever she fancied it. (*blurting out*) And if there *was* salt in it, sir, it wasn't me. I never took the salt near it.

POIROT:

What makes you think there was salt in it?

DORCAS:

Seeing it on the tray, sir.

POIROT:

You saw some salt on the tray?

DOCAS:

Yes. Coarse kitchen salt. I never noticed it when I took the tray up, but when I came to take it into the mistress's room I saw it at once. I suppose I ought to have asked cook to make some fresh. But I was in a hurry and I thought maybe the cocoa was all right, so I dusted it off the tray. Everything was such a muddle! Oh! Oh! I haven't even cleared the coffee-cups away last night in the drawing room... I'll be sacked for sure!

POIROT:

The good times will come again, Dorcas. At least, we hope so. *Bien!* Thank you very much.