

Scene Characters:

CADE

BUNDLE

LADY EILEEN “BUNDLE”

So, do you talk or are you just strong and silent?

ANTHONY CADE

Oh I babble. I burble—like a brook, you know. Sometimes I even ask questions.

LADY EILEEN “BUNDLE”

As, for instance?

ANTHONY CADE

Who occupies the second room on the left from the end?

LADY EILEEN “BUNDLE”

That’s Mademoiselle Brun’s room. The French governess. She endeavors to keep my young sisters in order. Dulcie and Daisy—like the song, you know. But mother got tired of having nothing but girls and died. Thought someone else could take on the job of providing an heir.

ANTHONY CADE

How long has Mademoiselle Brun been with you?

LADY EILEEN “BUNDLE”

Two months. Her Christian name is Geneviève. Say, do I ask the Scotland Yard man to have lunch with us, Mr. Cade? You know the etiquette of such things. We’ve never had a murder in the house before. Exciting, isn’t it? I’m sorry your character was cleared this morning. I’ve always wanted to meet a murderer and see for myself if they’re as genial and charming as the Sunday papers.

ANTHONY CADE

What about her references?

LADY EILEEN “BUNDLE”

Glowing! She lived for ten years with the Countess of What Not...Château de Breteuil, Dinard.

ANTHONY CADE

All done by letter? You didn’t actually meet the Countess in person?

LADY EILEEN “BUNDLE”

Exactly. Mr. Cade, whom do you suspect? I rather suspect Virginia as being the most unlikely person.

ANTHONY CADE

Perhaps I should suspect you?

LADY EILEEN “BUNDLE”

Member of the aristocracy secretly joins the Red Hand? Oh that would create a sensation!

ANTHONY CADE

You must be proud of all this. Chimney Manor.

LADY EILEEN “BUNDLE”

Yes—it means something, I suppose. But one’s too used to it. Anyway, we’re not here very much—too deadly dull. This old home is swathed in dust sheets for five months of the year. Once a week they take the sheets off and coaches full of tourists come and gape and listen to Tredwell describe the paintings.

ANTHONY CADE

Yet history has been made here once or twice, by all accounts.

LADY EILEEN "BUNDLE"

That's the kind of thing George is always saying.

Scene Characters:REVEL
BUNDLE**ACT 2 - Scene 5: Struggle in the Darkness**

(Lights up. Later that night within Chimney Manor. VIRGINIA has gone into BUNDLE's room)

VIRGINIA REVEL

Bundle. Oh Bundle. Wake up. Oh, do wake up!

LADY EILEEN "BUNDLE"

Hullo! What's the matter?

VIRGINIA REVEL

Thank goodness. I thought you'd never wake up. Are you properly awake now?

LADY EILEEN "BUNDLE"

I think so.

VIRGINIA REVEL

Things are happening.

LADY EILEEN "BUNDLE"

What kind of things?

VIRGINIA REVEL

Odd things. In the Council Chamber. I thought I heard a door bang somewhere.

LADY EILEEN "BUNDLE"

And what do you want me to do now? Get up and tackle a burglar?

VIRGINIA REVEL

I'm not sure that they are burglars. But don't let's waste time talking. Get up.

LADY EILEEN "BUNDLE"

Wait while I put on my boots. I'm not going to tackle hardened criminals with bare feet.

VIRGINIA REVEL

Well why don't we put on a gas mask and chain mail, shall we?

LADY EILEEN "BUNDLE"

All right I'm ready.

(BUNDLE picks up a fireplace poker. VIRGINIA stares at her)

It's the orthodox weapon.

(The two make their way to the Council Chamber)

VIRGINIA REVEL

Those boots of yours aren't exactly domes of silence, are they?

LADY EILEEN "BUNDLE"

I'm doing my best.

VIRGINIA REVEL

You'll have to take them off. I think they're doing something with the suits of armor. What do they want with a moldy old suit of armor? Chimney Manor is full of treasures that are much easier to take away.

LADY EILEEN "BUNDLE"

How many of them are there?

VIRGINIA REVEL

I couldn't see properly through the keyhole with only a flashlight.

(BUNDLE removes her boots. The two creep closer. BUNDLE puts her eye to the keyhole)

It's no good going on like this. We can't see anything, and we can't guess what they're up to.

(BUNDLE puts on her boots)

Listen to me. We'll open the door as softly as possible. You know where the light switch is?

VIRGINIA REVEL

Yes, just by the door.

LADY EILEEN "BUNDLE"

When I say 'Go' I want you to switch on the lights and I'll bash them with my poker.

VIRGINIA REVEL

Goodness, yes. Be careful.

LADY EILEEN "BUNDLE"

Don't scream or faint or anything.

(The ladies enter. A flashlight shone on the Holbein picture. Silhouetted against it was the figure of an INTRUDER, standing on a chair and gently tapping on the panelling. Hearing something swung around, directing their flashlight on to the women)

Lights!

(VIRGINIA flicks the switch...but nothing happens. Over the next minute the air fills with panting, scuffling sounds, flashlights roll on the ground. BUNDLE screams repeatedly for help, then crashes loudly into the armor. The INTRUDER races away and escapes outside. VIRGINIA races after him...right into the arms of MR. FISH. In the darkness FISH says...)

Scene Characters:

CADE

MCGRATH

ANTHONY CADE

Make it strong, James. I can tell you, I need it.

JAMES MCGRATH

I wouldn't take on that job of yours for anything.

ANTHONY CADE

Show me another, and I'll jump out of it fast enough.

JAMES MCGRATH

Are you in earnest about that? Because I do have one. It's back in England.

ANTHONY CADE

They can't collect on bills after seven years, can they, Jimmy?

JAMES MCGRATH

I suppose you know all about Herzoslovakia?

ANTHONY CADE

Just what one reads in the papers. Balkan State. Lots of assassinations. Why?

JAMES MCGRATH

Ever heard of Count Stylptitch?

ANTHONY CADE

I thought he was dead.

JAMES MCGRATH

He was. In Paris about two months ago. But as it happens I met him four years ago.

ANTHONY CADE

Really?

JAMES MCGRATH

I was walking along one night around the Pont Neuf when I saw half a dozen French toughs beating up a respectable-looking old gentleman. I hate a one-sided show, so I promptly butted in and proceeded to knock heads.

ANTHONY CADE

I'd like to have seen that!

JAMES MCGRATH

Only then did I find out I has rescued old Stylptitch.

ANTHONY CADE

Didn't his countrymen want him to come back and be president or something?

JAMES MCGRATH

That's right. Anyway, two weeks ago I got a strange looking parcel which contained, of all things, the unpublished manuscript of his memoirs. And a note sayin' if I delivered it to a London office, they were instructed to hand me a thousand pounds.

ANTHONY CADE

Really?

JAMES MCGRATH

Here's the thing: I'm headed west. I can't do it...and then you come along! So it's yours if you want it.

ANTHONY CADE

Deal! The tour was about over anyway. Ha!

(ANTHONY and JAMES toast)

Passage booked in your name, I suppose, so I'd better travel as James McGrath.

JAMES MCGRATH

Easy enough these days.

ANTHONY CADE

D'jou read it? The manuscript.

JAMES MCGRATH

Good Lord, no. Boring reminiscences...

ANTHONY CADE

Did the old Count say anything interesting when he was drunk?

JAMES MCGRATH

He said he knew where the Koh-i-noor was, I think.

ANTHONY CADE

The diamond? They keep it in the Tower, don't they?

JAMES MCGRATH

Big as your fist. And he said he knew the gang that was after him were "King Victor's people." Who is he anyway?

ANTHONY CADE

A crook! The most notorious jewel thief in the world. I think he did time.

JAMES MCGRATH

Let's just say you might have some difficulty handing over this manuscript at that publisher's office? Oh and while we're at it: I've got another little commission for you. Some woman in London. I got her love letters from a bloke I met in the field before he died of fever. He was trying to blackmail her. Thought it'd be right decent to return them to her.

Scene Characters:

CADE

ISAACSTEIN

Scene shifts to ANTHONY as he approaches

ISAACSTEIN in his London office)

ANTHONY CADE

I'm not going to waste your time. It's just a little matter of business that I want to put before you. I'm here about this Herzoslovakian business.

MR. ISAACSTEIN

I'm listening.

ANTHONY CADE

Uh...Oil... Wonderful thing, oil.

MR. ISAACSTEIN

Come to the point.

ANTHONY CADE

If those oil concessions are granted to another company you won't be exactly pleased about it?

MR. ISAACSTEIN

Do you have a proposition?

ANTHONY CADE

Right now you need a suitable claimant to the throne who possesses solid pro-British sympathies.

MR. ISAACSTEIN

That's correct. I suppose you have one?

ANTHONY CADE

That's my business.

MR. ISAACSTEIN

The genuine article? Provable? I can't stand for anymore funny business?

ANTHONY CADE

The absolute genuine article.

MR. ISAACSTEIN

Hmm. I shouldn't be where I am now if I hadn't learned to know whether a man is speaking the truth or not. What terms do you want?

ANTHONY CADE

The same loan, on the same conditions, that you offered to Prince Michael.

MR. ISAACSTEIN

And for you?

ANTHONY CADE

For the moment, nothing, except that I want you to come down to Chimney Manor tonight.

MR. ISAACSTEIN

I can't do that.

ANTHONY CADE

They've found the revolver, the one Michael was murdered with, in your suitcase.

MR. ISAACSTEIN

What?! That's false! I never put it there. I know nothing about it. I'm being framed!

ANTHONY CADE

If I were you, I'd come to Chimney Manor tonight.

MR. ISAACSTEIN

Why?!

(ANTHONY whispers something to ISAACSTEIN who then falls back in amazement)

You actually mean...

ANTHONY CADE

Come and see.

Scene Characters:

CATERHAM

BUNDLE

LOMAX

Scene 3: Battle Arrives to Solve the Murder

(Two days later. Chimney Manor, grand, but fading, country estate outside London. LADY CATERHAM - Catherine Brent, 9th Countess of Caterham – a royal more interested in lunch and sleep. She is with her eldest daughter, LADY EILEEN “BUNDLE” BRENT – sassy, smart, and a little bored)

LADY CATERHAM

This is the very devil of a business, you know. The very...devil. What did George Lomax say?

LADY EILEEN “BUNDLE”

He’s coming over at once. He’s panicked over someone’s memoirs, among other things. We are to ‘use the utmost discretion.’

LADY CATERHAM

That’s just the sort of idiotic thing George would say. However, once he gets here I shall wash my hands of this whole affair. I told him we called in the local police and he said, “That will not do. We must have Battle.” Whatever that means...

(CATERHAM and BUNDLE catch each other’s eye quickly)

LADY EILEEN “BUNDLE”

So where is the body, exactly?

LADY CATERHAM

In the Council Chamber.

LADY EILEEN “BUNDLE”

Did you find him?

LADY CATERHAM

Good Lord, no. You don’t think I usually get up at this unearthly hour in the morning, do you? The housemaid found it. Him. Anyway, Tredwell served breakfast but I don’t suppose I can eat anything.

(BUNDLE and CATERHAM move into the dining room where they inspect breakfast offerings)

Omelet, eggs and bacon, devilled bird, cold ham, cold pheasant. I don’t like any of these things.

LADY EILEEN “BUNDLE”

I’m famished. It must be the excitement.

(CATERHAM and BUNDLE get something and eat)

LADY CATERHAM

You young people like excitement, but I'm in a very delicate state of health. Avoid all worry, that's what my doctor says. How can I avoid worry when George lands me with a thing like this?

LADY EILEEN "BUNDLE"

He was almost incoherent over the telephone. Yapping about discretion and hushing it up.

LADY CATERHAM

Ugh. George is always talking to me of my 'position.' As if I had any.

LADY EILEEN "BUNDLE"

I wonder who murdered him. And why?

LADY CATERHAM

That's not our business, thank goodness. That's for the police to find out. But I hope it was Isaacstein.

LADY EILEEN "BUNDLE"

Yes. But why should Isaacstein murder him when he'd come down here expressly to meet him?

LADY CATERHAM

High finance-types. Who knows about those people?

(GEORGE LOMAX enters)

GEORGE LOMAX

We simply can't afford a scandal of any kind just now. The position is one of the utmost delicacy.

LADY CATERHAM

Morning, George. Kidney pie?

GEORGE LOMAX

One slip over this Herzoslovakian business and we're done. It is most important that the oil concessions should be granted to a British company.

LADY CATERHAM

It sure is. Creamed haddock?

GEORGE LOMAX

Good God no...

LADY CATERHAM

You think Stylptitch's reminiscences may upset the applecart.

LADY EILEEN "BUNDLE"

Stylptich? Oh, those memoirs...

GEORGE LOMAX

Of course they could! Suppose he wrote down the whole story for the world to read? Think of the scandal! If he didn't mean mischief, why did he send the manuscript to London in this roundabout way? This Cade fellow has got to know that restoring of that monarchy is imperative to the peace of Europe!

LADY CATERHAM

Would you like an egg...

GEORGE LOMAX

And what if he makes some reference to that unfortunate...missing...you know what?!

LADY CATERHAM

What?

GEORGE LOMAX

That THING. It happened while they were here at Chimney Manor.

LADY CATERHAM

Oh Yes! Very curious affair. It was never recovered?

GEORGE LOMAX

OF COURSE IT WASN'T. A national calamity—concessions jeopardized. You're sure you have told no one as yet?

LADY CATERHAM

Well, there's Bundle and myself. All the servants of course. Oh and that inspector you told.

(On the terrace appears SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE. He is from Scotland Yard, a squarely built middle-aged man with a face devoid of expression. He assesses the environs)

GEORGE LOMAX

Superintendent Battle. A man of the utmost discretion. He worked with us on plenty of other deplorable matters. Goodness when Baron Lolopretjzyl finds out...

LADY EILEEN "BUNDLE"

Baron WHAT?

GEORGE LOMAX

The best thing that you can do, Lady Caterham, is to leave everything in my hands.

Scene Characters:

CADE

REVEL

Scene 4: Group Scenes

(Later. Somewhere within Chimney Manor. VIRGINIA REVEL and ANTHONY CADE)

ANTHONY CADE

I think Battle is stumped at present by my apparent lack of motive.

VIRGINIA REVEL

What possible reason could you have for murdering an unknown foreign count?

ANTHONY CADE

You were at one time or other in Herzoslovakia, weren't you?

VIRGINIA REVEL

Yes. I was there with my husband, for two years, at the Embassy.

ANTHONY CADE

Just before the assassinations. Did you ever run across Prince Michael?

VIRGINIA REVEL

Of course I did. Horrid little wretch! He even proposed to me once.

ANTHONY CADE

And how did you respond?

VIRGINIA REVEL

One has to be diplomatic, but in plain terms I turned him down and he retired hurt and rejected.

ANTHONY CADE

I take it that you didn't meet the murdered man?

VIRGINIA REVEL

No. He retired immediately on arrival.

ANTHONY CADE

And you haven't seen the body?

VIRGINIA REVEL

No.

ANTHONY CADE

Could you get to see it, do you think?

VIRGINIA REVEL

I daresay I could. Why?

ANTHONY CADE

It's simply this. Prince Michael was traveling incognito, using the name Count Stanislaus.

VIRGINIA REVEL

Are you suggesting that Michael went to his rooms simply to avoid seeing me?

ANTHONY CADE

Do you realize that you're the only person here who knew Michael by sight?

VIRGINIA REVEL

Do you mean that this man was murdered could have been an imposter?

ANTHONY CADE

It's crossed my mind. Get Lady Caterham to show you the body and we can clear up that point at once. That reminds me. Is that your window up there? The second from the end over the Council Chamber?

VIRGINIA REVEL

No, my room is in the Elizabethan wing, the other side. Why?

ANTHONY CADE

As I walked away last night, after thinking I heard a shot, the light went up in that room.

VIRGINIA REVEL

How curious! I don't know who has that room, but I can find out. Perhaps they heard the shot?

ANTHONY CADE

If so, they haven't come forward to say so. I understood that nobody in the house heard the shot fired.

VIRGINIA REVEL

There's some extra mystery about those memoirs that we haven't fathomed yet.

ANTHONY CADE

You're right.

VIRGINIA REVEL

George—my cousin, suggested I should come down here and "Delilah" the memoirs out of him. Out of you. But alas, no memoirs! Also, when I said I hadn't written those letters, you said you knew I hadn't. How?

ANTHONY CADE

I can just tell. You might have had a lover, and you might have written to him, but the Virginia Revel of those letters was scared stiff. You're tougher than that.

VIRGINIA REVEL

It makes me feel as though I had a double somewhere.

ANTHONY CADE

Did you know that one of those letters was written from here?

VIRGINIA REVEL

How can that be?

ANTHONY CADE

I am beginning to think that the person who wrote those letters deliberately used your name.

VIRGINIA REVEL

Whom do you really think killed Michael? The Red Hand?

ANTHONY CADE

They might have done so. Pointless killing would be rather characteristic of them.

(VIRGINIA and ANTHONY are joined CATERHAM and BUNDLE)

Scene Characters:

CADE

FISH

BATTLE

FRENCH STRANGER

ANTHONY CADE

Hmmm. Also I've found out that Mademoiselle has the second room from the end—the one where I saw the light go up last night.

(HIRAM FISH enters, heading toward lunch)

HIRAM FISH

I caught you observing me in my secluded retreat this morning?

ANTHONY CADE

Ha. Meaning no harm, sir.

HIRAM FISH

There are moments, sir, when far from the maddening crowd is the only motto for a man of quiet tastes.

ANTHONY CADE

Indeed...

HIRAM FISH

Say, it's kind of being rumored around that the deceased gentleman was a Royal. And this detective of yours. Battle? No hustle to him. Young man, do you know how they get the water out of a mine?

ANTHONY CADE

How?

HIRAM FISH

By pumping.

(FISH goes inside. ANTHONY lags reflectively, then thinks he hears someone. He comes upon a strange man looking around)

ANTHONY CADE

You there. What are you doing here?

FRENCH STRANGER

I ask of you your pardon. I am wishing to return to the nearby inn and I have lost my way. Would Monsieur be so good as to direct me?

ANTHONY CADE

Certainly, but you don't go there by water, you know.

FRENCH STRANGER

Eh? Sorry...

ANTHONY CADE

I said that you won't get there by water. There's a right of way across the park—some distance away, but all this is the private part. You're trespassing.

FRENCH STRANGER

I am most sorry. I lost my direction entirely. I thought I would come up here and inquire.

ANTHONY CADE

Here. You go that way, right round the lake and straight on—you can't miss the path. When you get on it, turn to the left, and it will lead you to the village. You've been at the inn long?

FRENCH STRANGER

Since this morning. Many thanks for your kindness in directing me. Good morning, and thank you, monsieur, for setting me on the right road.

(THE STRANGER exits)

ANTHONY CADE

Hmmm. Second suspicious stranger from village inn...Not exactly a Comrade of the Red Hand...The French governess has the second window from the end...a mysterious Frenchman is found slinking round the grounds.

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

Seems a popular spot this afternoon.

(BATTLE has entered, seeming literally to have materialized from space)

ANTHONY CADE

Good God where did you spring from? I was just trying to put two and one and five and three together so as to make four. And it simply can't be done.

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

It cannot.

ANTHONY CADE

Battle, I want to go away. Can that be done?

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

Depends where you want to go.

ANTHONY CADE

I want to go to France, to the château of Madame la Comtesse de Breteuil. Say tomorrow after the inquest. I could be back here by Sunday evening.

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

I have no objection, provided you go where you say you're going then come straight back here.

ANTHONY CADE

Thanks. I expect certain minions will follow my every footstep. I still wish I knew what it was all about.

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

What do you mean?

ANTHONY CADE

The memoirs—what all the fuss is about. Were they only memoirs? And who steps into the murdered Michael's shoes? And where is that guy at present?

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

Prince Nicholas? We've reason to believe that he's in the United States.

ANTHONY CADE

Nicholas backed by America, Michael backed by England. Financiers in both countries anxious to obtain oil concessions. The Loyalist party adopted Michael as their candidate—now they'll have to look

Scene Characters:

BATTLE

LOMAX

ANCHOUKOFF

CADE

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

I'd rather like to question the Prince's servant. I've left her purposely to the last.

GEORGE LOMAX

What you say about Victor disturbs me greatly. I thought he was in prison?

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

Released a few months ago. Gave the French police the slip straightaway. For some reason or other, they believe he's in England.

GEORGE LOMAX

What should he be doing in England?

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

You. Now the story as well as I do. The Koh-i-noor. Biggest crown jewel heist in history.

GEORGE LOMAX

Hush! The name Koh-i-noor still causes anxiety all over Europe. If you must speak of it, call it the K. But you're not connecting that crime with this one, are you?

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

It's a possibility. Victor was arrested in Paris three days after the "disappearance" of the jewels. It was always hoped that he would someday lead us to those jewels again.

GEORGE LOMAX

But Chimney Manor has been ransacked and overhauled a dozen times over the years.

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

But what if lookers didn't know where to look? And what if Victor came here to look but was surprised by Michael, and shot him?

GEORGE LOMAX

A most likely solution of the crime!

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

I wouldn't go as far as that. Victor has never been known to take a life. And criminals always act true to type. If I may I invited someone who would have a unique perspective.

(BATTLE steps out of the door enough to call off...)

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

Natasha Anchoukoff?

NATASHA ANCHOUKOFF

Yes.

(NATASHA ANCHOUKOFF enters, Prince Michael's assistant, a tall, imposing woman)

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

Thank you for coming. You were valet to Prince Michael?

NATASHA ANCHOUKOFF

We didn't use names. Let us say I assisted His Highness'.

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

Very well. You know that your master was murdered last night?

(NATASHA has no reaction whatsoever)

When did you see your master last?

NATASHA ANCHOUKOFF

His Highness retired to bed at half past ten. I slept, as always, in the anteroom next to him. He must have gone downstairs. I did not hear him go. It may be that I was drugged. I have been an unfaithful servant, I slept while my master woke. I am accursed.

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

You were dedicated to your master, weren't you?

NATASHA ANCHOUKOFF

I would have died for him! And since he is dead, and I still live, my eyes shall not know sleep, or my heart rest, until I have avenged him!

(NATASHA draws an immense knife from beneath her coat and brandishes it)

Not all at once will I kill him—oh no!—first I will slit his nose, and cut off his ears and put out his eyes, and then—then, into his black heart, I will thrust this knife!

(NATASHA swiftly replaces the knife and exits as the man stare in amazement)

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

Purebred Herzoslovakian. Either that woman's sincere or she's the best bluffer I've ever seen. And if it's the former, God help Prince Michael's murderer when that human bloodhound gets hold of him.

(BATTLE exits as lights change)

Scene Characters:

REVEL

CADE

BATTLE

LEMOINE

VIRGINIA REVEL

Sadly the King and Queen perished...but what happened to the crown jewels?

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

Nobody knows. Not a mention of the jewels has ever been made public...until *this* moment. We did everything that could be done on the quiet. We know that the jewels didn't leave England with the Queen...but that's all. Her Majesty hid her jewels somewhere in Chimney Manor—but WHERE... we've never been able to discover. I shouldn't wonder if they are somewhere in this very room.

ANTHONY CADE

After all these years?

MONSIEUR LEMOINE

A fortnight after their stay here, the revolution broke out, they died, and Captain O'Neill was imprisoned in Paris. We hoped to find the packet of coded letters in his house, but it appears they had been stolen.

VIRGINIA REVEL

Where does this link up with the memoirs?

MONSIEUR LEMOINE

When the King and Queen stayed at Chimney Manor, Count Stylptitch was also here.

VIRGINIA REVEL

So he might have known about the hidden jewels?

MONSIEUR LEMOINE

Parfaitement

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

And, of course, if he's blurted out in his precious memoirs the wherewithal of those jewels, there will be trouble on at least two continents.

MONSIEUR LEMOINE

And he famously declared he'd make some startling revelation...in his memoirs. Hence the general anxiety to get hold of them. Our own secret police intended to seize that manuscript, but the Count somehow got rid of it before his death.

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

Still, there's no real reason to believe that he actually knew this secret of the jewels.

ANTHONY CADE

Other than his own words.

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE and MONSIEUR LEMOINE

What?

ANTHONY CADE

When Mr. McGrath gave me that manuscript to bring to England, he told me the circumstances of his one meeting with Stylptitch. McGrath rescued the Count from a band of Parisian thugs. After which the Count, as a gesture of gratitude, revealed two things: that he knew where the Koh-i-noor was, and that the gang who had attacked him were King Victor's men. You say that he was released a few months ago?

MONSIEUR LEMOINE

We thought he would make straight for England. But no. He went...elsewhere.

ANTHONY CADE

Where?

MONSIEUR LEMOINE

To the United States. And what do you think he called himself in America?: Prince Nicholas of Herzoslovakia.

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE

This certainly adds a wrinkle to Prince Michael's murder the other night.

MONSIEUR LEMOINE

But Nicholas was rumored to have died in the Congo years ago, but it's difficult to prove a death of that kind in that part of the world. So Victor passed himself off as Nicholas in U.S., enjoying a tremendous sum of American dollars all on account of promised oil concessions. But then, quite by accident, he was recognized and had to leave the country hurriedly. This time he did come to England. And that, ladies and gentlemen, is why I am here. Sooner or later Victor will come to Chimney Manor. That is, if he is not already here!

(Everyone reacts: "You think that?", "What?," "How can that be?," etc.)

In fact, I think he was here the night Michael was murdered, and again last night.

ANTHONY CADE

What really did happen last night?

MONSIEUR LEMOINE

I am afraid that I gave you a rather violent exercise.

VIRGINIA REVEL

It was you we chased, then?