

Chapter Twelve

Poirot's sudden departure was a bit mysterious and it only until three o'clock on Sunday afternoon that we saw him getting out of a car with Japp and Summerhaye. The little man had lost his nervous state and now appeared completely **complacent**. He bowed respectfully to Mary Cavendish.

“Madame, may I have your permission to hold a little meeting in the salon? Everyone must attend.”

Mary agreed looking a little sad and Poirot seated us all in the drawing room - Evelyn Howard, Cynthia, Lawrence, Dorcas and Annie. Alfred Inglethorp arrived from his room in the village after receiving a written request from Poirot.

Miss Howard objected immediately: “If he stays here I am leaving!”

Poirot begged her to stay and after a while Miss Howard agreed reluctantly to remain.

Poirot then stood up and bowing politely spoke to his **audience**.

“Messieurs, mesdames, as you know I was called by Monsieur John Cavendish to investigate this case. In the bedroom of the deceased I found: **firstly**, a fragment of green material; secondly, a stain on the carpet near the window, still damp; thirdly, an empty box of bromide powders.

slovička

complacent [kam'pleisnt] *spokojený*
firstly [fɜ:stli] *za prvé*

slovička zadarmo

audience [o:diəns] *audience, publikum,*
diváci, obecnstvo

“I shall discuss the green material first. I found it in the bolt of the communicating door between the room of Mrs Inglethorp and the room of Mademoiselle Cynthia. Only I, Hercule Poirot, recognised the material as a piece **torn** from a green **land armlet**.”

We all looked at each other.

“Only one person at Styles works on the land -- Mrs Cavendish. Therefore Mrs Cavendish must have entered the deceased’s room through the door communicating with Mademoiselle Cynthia’s room.”

“But that door was bolted on the inside!” I said.

“We only had the word of Mrs Cavendish, since she was the person who tried that particular door and reported it fastened.

“In the confusion she would have had enough time to bolt the door. The fragment corresponds exactly with a tear in Mrs Cavendish’s armlet.

“Also, at the inquest, Mrs. Cavendish declared that she had heard, from her own room, the sound of a table falling.

“I tested this statement. I asked my friend Monsieur Hastings to stand in the left wing of the building, just outside Mrs Cavendish’s door. I, with the police, went to the deceased’s room, and I, apparently accidentally, knocked over the same table. Yet, my friend later told me that he had heard nothing.

“Mrs Cavendish was not speaking the truth when she said she had been dressing in her room at the time of the murder.

“In fact, I was convinced that Mrs Cavendish was actually in the deceased’s room when the alarm was raised.”

slovíčka

torn	[to:n]	<i>utržený, odtržený</i>
armlet	[a:mlit]	<i>pásek na rukávu</i>

Mary was listening. She looked pale but was smiling.

“So,” continued Poirot, “Mrs Cavendish is in her mother-in-law’s room. Perhaps she is looking for something. Suddenly Mrs Inglethorp wakes up and is **seized** by a convulsion. She throws her arm to one side, knocks over the table by the bed, and then pulls at the bell.

“Mrs Cavendish is surprised and drops her candle, **scattering** wax on the carpet. She picks up the candle, and goes into Mademoiselle Cynthia’s room, closing the door behind her.

“She runs quickly out into the passage before anyone can see her. But she can already hear **footsteps** along the gallery which connects the two wings. So she runs back into the young woman’s room, and tries to wake her up. Everyone else is trying to break down Mrs Inglethorp’s door. No one wonders why Mrs Cavendish has not arrived with the rest. And no one saw her come from the other wing.” He looked at Mary Cavendish. “Am I right, madame?”

She bowed her head.

“Yes, but I did not think these facts would help prove my husband’s innocence.”

“The will!” cried Lawrence suddenly. “Mary, you destroyed the will!”

She shook her head, and Poirot said quietly: “No, Mrs Inglethorp did!”

“Impossible!” I exclaimed. “She had only made it out that very afternoon!”

slovíčka

seize	[si:z]	<i>zmocnit se, chytnout, uchopit, uchvátit</i>
scatter	[skætə(r)]	<i>rozházet, pobryndat, rozptýlit</i>
footstep	[futstep]	<i>krok, šlápěj</i>

“Mon ami, how can you account for the fact that, on one of the hottest days of the year, Mrs Inglethorp ordered a fire to be lit in her room?”

I gave a **gasp**. We had never thought about that!

Poirot continued. “The **temperature** on that day was 80 degrees in the shade. Why did Mrs Inglethorp order a fire? Because she wished to destroy something, and could think of no other way.

“Because the war **economy** was practised at Styles and no waste paper was thrown away. There was no other way in which she could destroy such a thick document as a will. So the discovery of the **charred** fragment in the grate was not a surprise to me.

“I did not know at the time that the will in question had only been made this afternoon. I believed that Mrs Inglethorp wanted to destroy her will because of the quarrel she had had that afternoon, and that the quarrel took place after, and not before the making of the will.

“However, I was wrong. I had to re-examine the facts. At four o’clock, Dorcas overheard her mistress saying angrily: ‘You need not think that any fear of publicity, or scandal between husband and wife will **deter** me.’ I thought, quite correctly, that these words were addressed, not to her husband, but to Mr John Cavendish.

“At five o’clock, one hour later, she uses almost the same words, but in a different way. She admits to Dorcas, ‘I don’t know what to do; scandal between husband and wife is a dreadful thing.’ At four o’clock she was angry, but completely in control. At five o’clock she is in distress, and says she has had a great shock.

slovička

gasp	[ga:sp]	<i>zajiknout se,</i> <i>zalapat po dechu</i>
charred	[tʃa:ð]	<i>zuhelnatělý</i>
deter	[di'tə:(r)]	<i>odradit</i>

slovička zadarmo

temperature	[temprətʃə(r)]	<i>teplota</i>
economy	[i'konəmi]	<i>ekonomie,</i> <i>hospodářství</i>

gramatická pilulka

At four o'clock she was angry, but completely in control. Vazbu *in control* užíváme podobně jako v češtině, když chceme říci, že se ovládáme, že se „držíme“, že máme sami sebe pod kontrolou. Máme-li „pod kontrolou“ nějakou situaci, použijeme předložku *under - under control*.

“It is clear that the second ‘scandal’ is not the same as the first -- and that it concerned herself!

“Let us reconstruct the scene. At four o’clock, Mrs Inglethorp quarrels with her son, and threatens to denounce him to his wife -- who overheard a great deal of the conversation.

“At half past four, Mrs Inglethorp, thinking about the validity of wills, makes a will in favour of her husband, which the two gardeners witness.

“At five o’clock, Dorcas finds her mistress extremely upset and with a piece of paper -- perhaps a letter -- in her hand. Then Mrs Inglethorp orders the fire to be lit in her room. Something happened between half past four and five o’clock to make Mrs Inglethorp change her mind completely.

“Mesdames et messieurs, what was that something? She was alone for that period of time. I can only guess. My guess is that Mrs Inglethorp needed some stamps and she had none of her own. She looked inside her husband’s desk and found something else -- the piece of paper which Dorcas saw in her hand, and which Mrs Inglethorp was never meant to see.

“On the other hand, Mrs Cavendish believed that the paper which her mother-in-law held was a written proof of her own husband’s **infidelity**. Mrs Inglethorp tried to assure her that it had nothing to do with that matter, but Mrs Cavendish did not believe her and believed Mrs Inglethorp was protecting her stepson.

slovíčka

infidelity [infi'deliti] *nevěra (manželská i náboženská)*

“Now, Mrs Cavendish looks to be a reserved person but she is very jealous of her husband. She decided to get hold of the paper. She had found the key to Mrs Inglethorp’s writing case, which had been lost that morning. She knew that her mother-in-law kept all important papers in this particular case.

“Some time that evening, Mrs Cavendish, unbolted the door leading into Mademoiselle Cynthia’s room.

“She decided to carry out the rest of her plan in the early hours of the morning as the servants were used to her being awake at that time. She dressed in her land clothes, and went through Mademoiselle Cynthia’s room into that of Mrs Inglethorp.”

He paused a moment, and Cynthia interrupted: “But I would have woken up if anyone had come through my room?”

“Not if you were drugged, mademoiselle.”

“Drugged?”

“Mais, oui! Through all the confusion and noise next door Mademoiselle Cynthia slept. Either she was pretending or she had been drugged. Remember that Mrs Cavendish had brought Mademoiselle Cynthia her coffee the night before.

“I had the all the coffee cups examined but the analysis found nothing. I also counted the cups carefully. Six people had had coffee and six cups were found.

“Then I realised that coffee had been brought for seven people, not six. Dr Bauerstein had been there that evening.

“This meant there was now one cup missing. Annie, the **housemaid**, did in fact bring in seven cups, not realising that Mr Inglethorp never drank coffee. Dorcas cleared them away the next morning and found six as usual -- or actually five, the sixth being the one found broken in Mrs Inglethorp’s room.

“I was confident that the missing cup belonged to Mademoiselle Cynthia. Also all the cups found, contained sugar, which Mademoiselle Cynthia never took in her coffee.

“Then Annie told me about some ‘salt’ on the tray of cocoa which she took every night to Mrs Inglethorp’s room. I had a sample of that cocoa **analysed**.”

“Dr Bauerstein had already done that,” interrupted Lawrence.

“Not exactly. The analyst reported whether strychnine was present. He did not have it tested, as I did, for a narcotic.”

“A **narcotic**?”

“Yes. Mrs Cavendish administered a safe, but effective, narcotic to Mrs Inglethorp and Mademoiselle Cynthia. Imagine her feelings when her mother-in-law becomes violently ill and she hears the word ‘poison’!

“Mrs Cavendish believed that the sleeping drug was harmless, but for one terrible moment she feared she was responsible for Mrs Inglethorp’s death. She panics, runs downstairs, and drops the coffee cup and saucer used by Mademoiselle Cynthia into a large brass vase, which is discovered later by Monsieur Lawrence.

slovíčka

housemaid [hausmeid] služebná (pro úklid)

slovíčka zadarmo

analyse [ænəlist] analyzovat

narcotic [na:'kotik] narkotikum

“She is, of course, very relieved to hear later on that strychnine was responsible for her mother-in-law’s death.

“This is why the symptoms of strychnine poisoning were delayed for so many hours.”

Poirot paused. Mary looked up at him.

“It is all quite true, Monsieur Poirot. It was the most awful hour of my life. I shall never forget it. But you are wonderful. I understand now----“

“What I meant when I told you that you could safely confess to Papa Poirot. But you would not trust me. But was the coffee poisoned?” continued Poirot looking at all of us. “It is a problem because Mrs Inglethorp never drank it.”

“What?” we all cried.

“No. You will remember the stain on the carpet in Mrs Inglethorp’s room. It was still damp, it smelled of coffee, and I also found some tiny pieces of **porcelain**.

I had put my little case on the table next to the bed and the top had **lifted up** and my case had fallen on the floor. The same thing must have happened when Mrs Inglethorp had laid down her cup of coffee on the table the night before.

I can only guess that Mrs Inglethorp picked up the broken cup and put it on the table by the bed. She heated up some cocoa and drank that instead.

slovička

lift up [lift ap] *zvednout se*

slovička zadarmo

porcelain [po:slin] *porcelán*

We know the cocoa contained no strychnine. The coffee was never drunk. Yet the strychnine must have been administered between seven and nine o'clock that evening. But how?"

Poirot looked round the room then answered his own question. "Her medicine!"

"Remember, strychnine was already in the mixture. The strychnine that killed Mrs Inglethorp was the identical strychnine prescribed by Dr Wilkins. An **extract** from a book on **dispensing** which I found at the Red Cross Hospital at Tadminster showed a **prescription**, used in a famous medical case, which included strychnine and bromide.

"In just a few hours this solution leaves, at the bottom of a bottle, a deposit of the strychnine salt as an **insoluble** bromide in a **transparent** crystal form. A lady in England lost her life by taking a similar mixture: in the last dose she took she swallowed nearly all the strychnine!"

"But," continued Poirot, "there was no bromide in Dr Wilkins' prescription. However, you will remember that I mentioned an empty box of bromide powders.

One or two of those powders introduced into the full bottle of medicine would effect the poison. The result would be a deposit of strychnine at the bottom of the bottle, which would mean that all of it would be taken in the last dose. The person who usually poured out Mrs Inglethorp's medicine was always very careful not to shake the bottle, but to leave the sediment at the bottom of it undisturbed.

slovíčka

dispensing	[di'spensɪŋ]	<i>dávkování</i>
prescription	[pri'skripʃən]	<i>předpis</i> (<i>lékařský ap.</i>)
insoluble	[in'soljubl]	<i>nerozpustný</i>

slovíčka zadarmo

extract	[ik'strækt]	<i>extrakt</i>
transparent	[træns'pærənt]	<i>transparentní</i>

It is my belief that this crime was supposed to have been committed on Monday evening. On that day, Mrs Inglethorp's bell wire was cut and on Monday evening Mademoiselle Cynthia was spending the night with friends. Therefore, Mrs Inglethorp would have been alone in the right wing.

But, anxious not to be late for the village bazaar, Mrs Inglethorp forgot to take her medicine, and the next day she had lunch at a friend's house, so the last and **fatal** dose was taken twenty-four hours after the murderer had intended.

That delay provided me with the last link in the chain."

We all watched excitedly as Poirot held up three thin strips of paper.

"A letter in the murderer's own handwriting, mes amis! Mrs Inglethorp realised she was in danger but it was too late for her to escape."

Poirot put the pieces of paper together and read:

"Dearest Evelyn:

*You are anxious because you have heard nothing tonight. It is all right - only it will be tonight instead of last night. We will have a good time once the old woman is dead. No one can blame us for the crime. That idea of yours about the **bromides** was pure genius! But we must be very careful. One false step ---"*

slovíčka

bromide [brəʊmaɪd] bromid

slovíčka zadarmo

fatal [feɪtəl] fatální, osudový

“Here, my friends,” said Poirot, “the letter stops. Perhaps the writer was interrupted; but there is no question over his identity. We all know this handwriting and----“

A scream broke Poirot’s words. “You devil! How did you get it?”

A chair fell over but after one quick gesture from Poirot his attacker fell on the floor.

“Messieurs, mesdames,” said Poirot, triumphantly, “let me introduce you to the murderer, Mr Alfred Inglethorp!”