

HUBBARD. Right . . . Call me back when he leaves the station. . . . (During the phone call Max moves slowly to hall door and opens it. He looks up thoughtfully at the ledge above the door, then stares down at the spot where Swann died and then back to the ledge. He feels along it with his fingers and looks puzzled. To Max, as he rings off.) Well, Mr. Halliday, have you got it?

MAX. (Puzzled.) I don't think so. (Slowly.) Where is Mrs. Wendice's key? (Hubbard goes through open hall door into passage. He takes her key from under the stair carpet and holds it up. Then he replaces it exactly in the same place.)

HUBBARD. It took me just half an hour to find it.

MAX. But if it was there—why didn't Wendice use it just now?

HUBBARD. He didn't use it because he doesn't realize it's there. He still thinks it's in his wife's handbag. You see, you were very nearly right. (To Margot.) He told Swann that he would leave your key under the stair carpet, Mrs. Wendice, and told him to return it to the same place when he left. But as Swann was killed he naturally assumed that your key would still be in one of Swann's pockets. That was his little mistake. Because Swann had done exactly what you suggested, Mr. Halliday. (Going through the motions.) He unlocked the door—and then returned the key before he came in. . . .

MAX. And it's been out there ever since! And the key Wendice took out of Swann's pocket and returned to her handbag was . . .

HUBBARD. Swann's own latchkey! Mind you, even I didn't guess that at once. At first I thought your husband must have changed the lock. It had always surprised me that no key was found on Swann's body. After all, most men carry a latchkey about with them. Then I had a brainwave. I took the key that was in your handbag to Mrs. Van Dorn's and unlocked the door of her apartment. Then I borrowed her telephone and called Scotland Yard.

MARGOT. Why did you bring me back here?

HUBBARD. Because you were the only other person who could possibly have left that key outside. I had to find out if you knew it was there.

MARGOT. Suppose I had known?

HUBBARD. (With a smile.) Er . . . You didn't!

MARGOT. (Suddenly.) Max!

MAX. Yes, darling?

MARGOT. I think I'm going to have that breakdown right now

(Margot turns her head into Max's shoulder and begins to cry softly. Max puts his arms around her. Phone rings.)

HUBBARD. O'Brien?

O'BRIEN. Yes, sir. He's just left the station.

HUBBARD. Right! (Rings off. To Margot and Max as he crosses to hall door.) Try and hang on a little longer! (Opens door and calls upstairs.) Williams!

WILLIAMS. (Upstairs.) Sir!

HUBBARD. He's just left the station. . . . Give me a thump if he comes this way.

WILLIAMS. (From upstairs.) Right, sir. (Hubbard closes door and makes sure it is locked properly.)

MARGOT. (To Max.) Handkerchief. (Max produces his handkerchief and Margot wipes her eyes and gives her nose a good blow.)

MAX. (To Hubbard.) What happens now?

HUBBARD. Sooner or later he'll come back here. As I've pinched his key, he'll have to try the one in the handbag. When that doesn't fit, he'll realize his mistake, put two and two together and look under the stair carpet.

MAX. But . . . if he doesn't do that—all this is pure guess work. We can't prove a thing.

HUBBARD. That's perfectly true. (Slowly, with emphasis, pointing to hall door.) But once he opens that door—we shall know everything. (Pause.)

MAX. What will you do then?

HUBBARD. I'm to phone Scotland Yard. They're standing by for my call now.

MAX. And Mrs. Wendice?

HUBBARD. Will have nothing else to fear . . . (There are three thumps on the ceiling. Max and Margot stand up. Hubbard switches off the lights and stands by the telephone on desk facing hall. Long silence.)

MAX. (Gently.) All right, Margot?

MARGOT. (In a whisper.) Yes—I'm all right. (Max puts his arms around Margot.)

HUBBARD. (Softly.) Quiet, now, you two. (There is another long silence and then the sound of the street door opening and shutting. Footsteps to hall door. Pause. Sound of key in lock. It doesn't fit. Long pause. Footsteps moving back to front door. Slam. Max gives