

"That is all!" Britz dismissed him.

This dramatic interruption of the hearing served to increase the strained expectancy with which those in the room had followed the proceedings. A dozen times Manning and Greig had experienced a darting sense of alarm as Britz's case threatened to collapse. Momentarily they expected to hear him acknowledge that he had erred in his accusations and to see him abandon his efforts to fix the crime on Mrs. Collins, Collins, Ward and Beard.

But with each new setback Britz became all the more determined. And now he favored Luckstone with an exultant gleam that carried no hope of compromise.

"You realize the significance of the identification, don't you?" Britz inquired with exasperating coolness.

"I don't see what it has to do with the murder," Luckstone retorted. "My clients never saw Mr. Whitmore after they left him at the opera house."

"Then you mean to intimate that if he was shot that night, the shooting was done by an outsider?"

"That is the only reasonable inference."

"It is a most unreasonable inference," said Britz.