

"How do you know?" It was Sheriff Potter speaking. He scraped his feet nervously on the floor. "How do you know, Carroll?"

"By a dozen different ways, Sheriff. I'd rather that he confess—"

"I didn't do it! I didn't do it!" Farnam's voice came in a weak, unconvincing moan. "I swear t' Gawd I didn't kill her."

"Tell us how you know?" begged Potter.

"Well. . . ." Carroll hitched his chair forward. His eyes bored unwaveringly into those of Mart Farnam: "I'll admit that from the beginning I was biased. I started my investigation with the premise that Stanford Forrest was innocent. You had the same hunch, Sheriff, so you can understand my feelings; I who grew up with him and was closer to him than a brother could ever have been.

"A crime investigation is, after all, nothing but a mass of false scents. But it is a grave mistake to presuppose that an obviously false trail is useless. That such is not the case was never more clearly proven than in this very crime.

"My idea has always been that to understand a crime, the investigator must put himself as