

and I suited her," said Bertha, speaking slowly like a man who has to pick his way in a foreign language, yet speaking more or less correctly.

"As you have been with her so long, you must know a good deal about her affairs," suggested the superintendent. "I do not know very much," was the reply. "She was the mistress and I was the servant."

"Quite so, but you would know her friends or some of them?"

"By sight, yes, some of them."

"Well, can you not give us some help, some indication—?"

"As to the person who killed her?" asked Bertha.

"Yes," said Johnson eagerly.

"I can give you none whatever. I was her servant, not her confidante."

"You can throw no light on the murder?"

"None at all."

"WHEN did you see Miss Chase last?" inquired the superintendent, shifting ground.

"When she went out of the flat yesterday evening; it was about seven o'clock, and she was dining out—where, she did not tell me. She said it might be late before she would return, and told me not to wait up for her."

"You saw her last about seven o'clock?"

"That is what I said."

"She did not tell you where she was to dine, but did she mention with whom—or was she dining alone, perhaps at a club?"

"I do not know. She was not communicative. She was the mistress and I was the servant," repeated Bertha Schmidt. "She never told me such things."

"But now and then did she never mention any name—say, of some lady or gentleman friend with whom she dined?"

"Never; why should she?" asked the maid.

"Of course not." It was Villiers Chase who spoke. "You were not in her confidence, Bertha?"

"Certainly not, sir."

"But have you no idea?—did you never get a hint even?—sometimes such things are overheard?" said Johnson.

"I know nothing," said Bertha, with a face that now had become stolid and almost sullen.

"Miss Chase received a telegram here yesterday afternoon," said the superintendent. "Do you happen to know anything about it?"

"I took in a telegram for her in the afternoon—certainly, that is true, and I gave it to her at once."

"You did not see the message?"

"No, I did not. It came about five o'clock or a little after five, and I took it in to her at once; that is all I know about it."

"You cannot help us at all?" asked Johnson, after some moments' thought.

"I know nothing," said Bertha again, with an air of injury. The superintendent studied her closely, and wondered if she were concealing something, but promptly decided against that supposition, for Villiers had said that his sister was a proud woman, and it was not likely that a woman of that description would tittle-tattle with her servant.

"I shall have to search the flat," said Johnson to Villiers. "Perhaps I may come upon some clue in that way."

"Do whatever you think is right," said Chase.

They had been standing in the hall of the flat; it was furnished as a sort of lounge, and it was in it that there burned the electric lamp which had been shining through the glass panel of the door.

"Does the light burn all night?" Johnson asked Bertha Schmidt, as they passed into the sitting room.

"No. Had my mistress come back, she would have put it out," said Schmidt. "I woke up a short time ago and peeping out of my room saw the light was still burning. I guessed that the fraulein had not returned, but looked into her room to make sure. That is why I told her brother, the captain, that she was not here."

"I see. Were you surprised?"

"Yes, for I think she would have

told me had she intended to spend the night with one of her friends."

"She sometimes did that?"

"Not often, and she always told me beforehand. I was worrying over her not being here when you knocked at the door."

This was all straightforward enough, and Superintendent Johnson merely nodded his head. He proceeded to make a careful investigation of the sitting-room, while Villiers Chase and Max looked on; it was beautifully and even luxuriously furnished, and save for a handsome desk-table afforded no hint that it was the work-room of a journalist. It was characteristically a woman's room, with many lovely things in it; such was the impression it made on Max. The drawers of the desk-table were locked, but after some ineffective trials the superintendent found a key in the bunch he had taken from Sylvia's handbag which opened them. He devoted a considerable time to the papers and letters; they were all connected with the literary work in one way or another, but there were not many of them, and they were of comparatively recent date. Johnson read them, put them back in their places, locked the drawers, and sealed the desk-table.

"There is nothing in them that, so far as I can see will be of the slightest assistance," he remarked to Villiers. "They are simply what may be called business papers and letters—notes and correspondence about her literary work, but I may have to read them again, so I am taking the precaution of sealing them up; I wish them kept intact at present."

"Very well," said Villiers. "My sister was absorbed in her work, and except in a social way she had no interests outside it."

"Did she go much into society?"

"To some extent, yes, but I know very little of that part of her life except that it did not fill a large place with her."

"I must have been a small part of her life surely," Johnson observed, "for her desk contained no trace of anything of the sort—I mean such as cards for receptions and other society functions."

"I noticed that also. Her work was her life undoubtedly."

After examining the other articles in the sitting-room they went into Sylvia's bedroom which was as splendidly furnished as the former—if anything it was even more luxurious, and Max secretly was greatly struck by these evidences of Sylvia's prosperity; he had had no notion that Sylvia Chase was so well-off, and was more than a little bewildered by it, because he knew very well that women journalists, with the exception of a few who write on fashions, make but small and often uncertain incomes. True, Sylvia was by way of being a specialist on foreign topics, and would probably be paid accordingly, but after all the field was exceedingly limited. His bewilderment grew as the superintendent, helped by Bertha Schmidt, examined the bedroom, for not only had Sylvia had many beautiful and expensive clothes and costly furs, but she had also possessed a stock of jewels of all descriptions which a very rich woman might have coveted.

Max recalled what Villiers had said of his sister, how she had saved money while in Germany, and with that and some money her brother had given her had furnished the flat, and how she had an annuity from the Von Nordheims; her means, however, hardly accounted for all this magnificent jewellery! How had she come by such a store? Max, however, kept his thoughts to himself. But it was clear that Johnson had some ideas on the same matter.

"Miss Chase's jewels," he said to Villiers, "are remarkably fine; they are very valuable."

"She had a passion for that kind of thing," said her brother simply, "but I did not know she had such a quantity." The circumstance did not appear to surprise him.

"Presents, I suppose?" asked Johnson, civilly.

"Some of them, probably, but I know she bought now and again a

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