

—companion I could scarcely call him—and asked him when had the accident occurred to Mr. Brabazon. A gruff “don’t know” was the only reply I got. Before I had time to put any further questions we were at the foot of the steps leading to the hall door. Together we mounted them, and Mr. Brabazon’s servant, taking a key from his pocket, opened the ponderous door of Redpost House. The hall was in utter darkness, and I had almost begun to fear that I had been decoyed into the house for some occult purpose, when the servant struck a match, and lighting a lamp which lay on the hall table, beckoned me to follow him upstairs.

Up six flights of broad stone stairs we toiled, and at last we reached a landing upon which three black panelled doors opened out. Knocking at one of these doors a quiet “Come in” reached my ears. The servant then stepped backward, and addressing me, said, “Go in, please.”

The room I entered had but one window, covered with a pale yellow blind. This window was lozenge-shaped, and the lowermost part of it was not more than a couple of feet from the floor. It was a sombre apartment. The furniture and draperies were all black. The floor was of polished oak, and gleamed like a sheet of dark glass. A lamp was on the table near the window. These details my eyes took in at a swift glance, and then I saw in a corner of the room an elderly white-haired man, whose back was towards me, leaning over a couch. He turned as I closed the door behind me, and in a gentle voice said,