

ALL BUT
MRS R &
NARRACOTT

ROGERS. Yes, sir.

ARMSTRONG. I'll give you a hand.

VERA. Will she be all right, Doctor?

ARMSTRONG. Yes, quite all right.

(ARMSTRONG and ROGERS help MRS. ROGERS up and take her out to the hall. MARSTON turns to WARGRAVE.)

MARSTON. Don't know about you, sir, but I feel I need another drink.

WARGRAVE. I agree.

MARSTON. I'll get them.

MACKENZIE. *(Muttering.)* Preposterous - that's what it is - preposterous.

MARSTON. Whiskey for you, Sir Lawrence?

EMILY. I should like a glass of water, please.

VERA. Yes, I'll get it. I'll have a little whiskey too.

(VERA takes a glass of water to EMILY. They sip their drinks, eyeing each other warily. ARMSTRONG enters from the hall.)

ARMSTRONG. She'll be all right. I've given her a sedative.

BLORE. Now, then, Doctor, you'll want a drink after all this.

ARMSTRONG. No, thank you, I never touch it.

BLORE. Oh, so you said. You have this one, General?

(BLORE takes a drink to MACKENZIE. MARSTON and LOMBARD refill their glasses. ROGERS enters from the hall. Everyone focuses attention on him. WARGRAVE takes charge.)

★ WARGRAVE. Now, then, Rogers, we must get to the bottom of this. Tell us what you know about Mr. Owen.

ROGERS. He owns this place, sir.

WARGRAVE. I am aware of that fact. What I want you to tell me is what you yourself know about the man.

ROGERS. I can't say, sir. You see, I've never seen him.

(There is a stir of interest.)

MACKENZIE. What d'you mean, you've never seen him?

ROGERS. We've only been here just under a week, sir, my wife and I. We were engaged by letter through a registry office. The Regina, in Plymouth.

BLORE. That's a high-class firm. We can check on that.

WARGRAVE. Have you got the letter?

ROGERS. The letter engaging us? Yes, sir.

(ROGERS hunts for it. After a moment he hands it to WARGRAVE who looks over it.)

WARGRAVE. Go on with your story.

ROGERS. We arrived here like the letter said, on the 4th.

Everything was in order, plenty of food in stock and everything very nice. Just needed dusting and that.

WARGRAVE. What next?

ROGERS. Nothing, sir. That is, we got orders to prepare the rooms for a house party - eight. Then yesterday, by the morning post, I received another letter saying Mr. and Mrs. Owen might be detained and, if so, we was to do the best we could, and it gave the instructions about dinner and putting on the gramophone record. Here it is, sir.

(ROGERS hands over letter.)

WARGRAVE. Hmm. Headed Ritz Hotel and typewritten.

(BLORE takes the letter.)

BLORE. Coronation machine Number Five. Quite new. No defects. Ensign paper - most common make. We shan't get much out of this. We might try it for fingerprints, but it's been handled too much.

LOMBARD. Quite the little detective.

(WARGRAVE turns and looks at him sharply.)

BLORE's manner has completely changed, so has his voice. MARSTON takes the letter.)

MARSTON. Got some fancy Christian names, hasn't he?

Ulick Norman Owen. Quite a mouthful.

(**WARGRAVE** takes the letter from **MARSTON** and looks around the room in his court manner.)

WARGRAVE. I am obliged to you, Mr. Marston. You have drawn my attention to a curious and suggestive point. I think the time has come for all of us to pool our information. It would be well for everybody to come forward with all the information they have regarding our unknown host. We are all his guests. I think it would be profitable if each one of us were to explain exactly how that came about.

(*There is a pause.*)

EMILY. There's something very peculiar about all this. I received a letter with a signature that was not very easy to read. It purported to be from a woman whom I had met at a certain summer resort two or three years ago. I took the name to be Ogden. I am quite certain that I have never met or become friendly with anyone of the name of Owen.

WARGRAVE. Have you got that letter, Miss Brent?

EMILY. Yes. I will fetch it for you.

(*EMILY exits to the hall.*)

WARGRAVE. Miss Claythorne?

VERA. I never actually met Mrs. Owen. I wanted a holiday post and I applied to a secretarial agency. Miss Grenfell's in London. I was offered this post and accepted.

WARGRAVE. And you were never interviewed by your prospective employer?

VERA. No. This is the letter.

(*VERA hands it to him and WARGRAVE reads.*)

WARGRAVE. "Soldier Island, Sticklehaven, Devon. I have received your name from Miss Grenfell's Agency. I understand she knows you personally. I shall be glad to pay you the salary you ask, and shall expect you to take up your duties on August 8th. The train is the 12:10

from Paddington and you will be met at Oakbridge Station. I enclose five pounds for expenses. Yours truly,
Una Nancy Owen"

(*MARSTON makes to the balcony.*)

Mr. Marston?

MARSTON. Don't actually know the Owens. Got a wire from a pal of mine, Badger Berkeley. Told me to roll up here. Surprised me a bit because I had an idea the old horse had gone to Norway. I haven't got the wire.

WARGRAVE. Thank you. Doctor Armstrong?

ARMSTRONG. In the circumstances, I think I may admit that my visit here was professional. Mr. Owen wrote me that he was worried about his wife's health - her nerves, to be precise. He wanted a report without her being alarmed. He therefore suggested that my visit should be regarded as that of an ordinary guest.

WARGRAVE. You had no previous acquaintance with the family?

ARMSTRONG. No.

WARGRAVE. But you had no hesitation in obeying the summons?

ARMSTRONG. A colleague of mine was mentioned and a very handsome fee was suggested. I was due for a holiday, anyway.

(*EMILY re-enters and hands a letter to WARGRAVE, who reads.*)

WARGRAVE. "Dear Miss Brent: I do hope you remember me. We were together at Bell Haven Guest House in August some years ago and we seemed to have so much in common. I am starting a guest house of my own on an island off the coast of Devon. I think there is really an opening for a place where there is good plain English cooking, and a nice old-fashioned type of person. None of this nudity and gramophones half the night. I shall be very glad if you could see your way to spending your summer holiday on Soldier Island - as