

GALSWORTHY
JOHN

LOYALTIES

John Galsworthy

Loyalties

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ACT I

SCENE I

The dressing-room of CHARLES WINSOR, owner of Meldon Court, near Newmarket; about eleven-thirty at night. The room has pale grey walls, unadorned; the curtains are drawn over a window Back Left Centre. A bed lies along the wall, Left. An open door, Right Back, leads into LADY ADELA's bedroom; a door, Right Forward, into a long corridor, on to which abut rooms in a row, the whole length of the house's left wing. WINSOR's dressing-table, with a light over it, is Stage Right of the curtained window. Pyjamas are laid out on the bed, which is turned back. Slippers are handy, and all the usual gear of a well-appointed bed-dressing-room. CHARLES WINSOR, a tall, fair, good-looking man about thirty-eight, is taking off a smoking jacket.

WINSOR. Hallo! Adela!

V. OF LADY A. [From her bedroom] Hallo!

WINSOR. In bed?

V. OF LADY A. No.

She appears in the doorway in under-garment and a wrapper. She, too, is fair, about thirty-five, rather delicious, and suggestive of porcelain.

WINSOR. Win at Bridge?

LADY A. No fear.

WINSOR. Who did?

LADY A. Lord St Erth and Ferdy De Levis.

WINSOR. That young man has too much luck – the young bouncer won two races to-day; and he's as rich as Croesus.

LADY A. Oh! Charlie, he did look so exactly as if he'd sold me a carpet when I was paying him.

WINSOR. [Changing into slippers] His father did sell carpets, wholesale, in the City.

LADY A. Really? And you say I haven't intuition! [With a finger on her lips] Morison's in there.

WINSOR. [Motioning towards the door, which she shuts] Ronny Dancy took a tenner off him, anyway, before dinner.

LADY A. No! How?

WINSOR. Standing jump on to a bookcase four feet high. De Levis had to pay up, and sneered at him for making money by parlour tricks. That young Jew gets himself disliked.

LADY A. Aren't you rather prejudiced?

WINSOR. Not a bit. I like Jews. That's not against him – rather the contrary these days. But he pushes himself. The General tells me he's deathly keen to get into the Jockey Club. [Taking off his tie] It's amusing to see him trying to get round old St Erth.

LADY A. If Lord St Erth and General Canynge backed him he'd get in if he did sell carpets!

WINSOR. He's got some pretty good horses. [Taking off his waistcoat] Ronny Dancy's on his bones again, I'm afraid. He had a bad day. When a chap takes to doing parlour stunts for a bet – it's a sure sign. What made him chuck the Army?

LADY A. He says it's too dull, now there's no fighting.

WINSOR. Well, he can't exist on backing losers.

LADY A. Isn't it just like him to get married now? He really is the most reckless person.

WINSOR. Yes. He's a queer chap. I've always liked him, but I've never quite made him out. What do you think of his wife?

LADY A. Nice child; awfully gone on him.

WINSOR. Is he?

LADY A. Quite indecently – both of them. [Nodding towards the wall, Left] They're next door.

WINSOR. Who's beyond them?

LADY A. De Levis; and Margaret Orme at the end. Charlie, do you realise that the bathroom out there has to wash those four?

WINSOR. I know.

LADY A. Your grandfather was crazy when he built this wing; six rooms in a row with balconies like an hotel, and only one bath – if we hadn't put ours in.

WINSOR. [Looking at his watch] Half-past eleven. [Yawns] Newmarket always makes me sleepy. You're keeping Morison up.

LADY ADELA goes to the door, blowing a kiss. CHARLES goes up to his dressing-table and begins to brush his hair, sprinkling on essence. There is a knock on the corridor door.

Come in.

DE LEVIS enters, clad in pyjamas and flowered dressing-gown. He is a dark, good-looking, rather Eastern young man. His face is long and disturbed.

Hallo! De Levis! Anything I can do for you?

DE LEVIS. [In a voice whose faint exoticism is broken by a vexed excitement] I say, I'm awfully sorry, Winsor, but I thought I'd better tell you at once. I've just had – er – rather a lot of money stolen.

WINSOR. What! [There is something of outrage in his tone and glance, as who should say: "In my house?"] How do you mean stolen?

DE LEVIS. I put it under my pillow and went to have a bath; when I came back it was gone.

WINSOR. Good Lord! How much?

DE LEVIS. Nearly a thousand-nine hundred and seventy, I think.

WINSOR. Phew! [Again the faint tone of outrage, that a man should have so much money about him].

DE LEVIS. I sold my Rosemary filly to-day on the course to Bentman the bookie, and he paid me in notes.

WINSOR. What? That weed Dancy gave you in the Spring?

DE LEVIS. Yes. But I tried her pretty high the other day; and she's in the Cambridgeshire. I was only out of my room a quarter of an hour, and I locked my door.

WINSOR. [Again outraged] You locked —

DE LEVIS. [Not seeing the fine shade] Yes, and had the key here. [He taps his pocket] Look here! [He holds out a pocket-book] It's been stuffed with my shaving papers.

WINSOR. [Between feeling that such things don't happen, and a sense that he will have to clear it up] This is damned awkward, De Levis.

DE LEVIS. [With steel in his voice] Yes. I should like it back.

WINSOR. Have you got the numbers of the notes?

DE LEVIS. No.

WINSOR. What were they?

DE LEVIS. One hundred, three fifties, and the rest tens and fives.

WINSOR. What d'you want me to do?

DE LEVIS. Unless there's anybody you think —

WINSOR. [Eyeing him] Is it likely?

DE LEVIS. Then I think the police ought to see my room. It's a lot of money.

WINSOR. Good Lord! We're not in Town; there'll be nobody nearer than Newmarket at this time of night – four miles.

The door from the bedroom is suddenly opened and LADY ADELA appears.

She has on a lace cap over her finished hair, and the wrapper.

LADY A. [Closing the door] What is it? Are you ill, Mr De Levis?

WINSOR. Worse; he's had a lot of money stolen. Nearly a thousand pounds.

LADY A. Gracious! Where?

DE LEVIS. From under my pillow, Lady Adela – my door was locked – I was in the bath-room.

LADY A. But how fearfully thrilling!

WINSOR. Thrilling! What's to be done? He wants it back.

LADY A. Of course! [With sudden realisation] Oh! But Oh! it's quite too unpleasant!

WINSOR. Yes! What am I to do? Fetch the servants out of their rooms? Search the grounds? It'll make the devil of a scandal.

DE LEVIS. Who's next to me?

LADY A. [Coldly] Oh! Mr De Levis!

WINSOR. Next to you? The Dancys on this side, and Miss Orme on the other. What's that to do with it?

DE LEVIS. They may have heard something.

WINSOR. Let's get them. But Dancy was down stairs when I came up. Get Morison, Adela! No. Look here! When was this exactly? Let's have as many alibis as we can.

DE LEVIS. Within the last twenty minutes, certainly.

WINSOR. How long has Morison been up with you?

LADY A. I came up at eleven, and rang for her at once.

WINSOR. [Looking at his watch] Half an hour. Then she's all right. Send her for Margaret and the Dancys – there's nobody else in this wing. No; send her to bed. We don't want gossip. D'you mind going yourself, Adela?

LADY A. Consult General Canynge, Charlie.

WINSOR. Right. Could you get him too? D'you really want the police, De Levis?

DE LEVIS. [Stung by the faint contempt in his tone of voice] Yes, I do.

WINSOR. Then, look here, dear! Slip into my study and telephone to the police at Newmarket. There'll be somebody there; they're sure to have drunks. I'll have Treisure up, and speak to him. [He rings the bell].

LADY ADELA goes out into her room and closes the door.

WINSOR. Look here, De Levis! This isn't an hotel. It's the sort of thing that doesn't happen in a decent house. Are you sure you're not mistaken, and didn't have them stolen on the course?

DE LEVIS. Absolutely. I counted them just before putting them under my pillow; then I locked the door and had the key here. There's only one door, you know.

WINSOR. How was your window?

DE LEVIS. Open.

WINSOR. [Drawing back the curtains of his own window] You've got a balcony like this. Any sign of a ladder or anything?

DE LEVIS. No.

WINSOR. It must have been done from the window, unless someone had a skeleton key. Who knew you'd got that money? Where did Kentman pay you?

DE LEVIS. Just round the corner in the further paddock.

WINSOR. Anybody about?

DE LEVIS. Oh, yes!

WINSOR. Suspicious?

DE LEVIS. I didn't notice anything.

WINSOR. You must have been marked down and followed here.

DE LEVIS. How would they know my room?

WINSOR. Might have got it somehow. [A knock from the corridor] Come in.

TREISURE, the Butler, appears, a silent, grave man of almost supernatural conformity. DE LEVIS gives him a quick, hard look, noted and resented by WINSOR.

TREISURE. [To WINSOR] Yes, sir?

WINSOR. Who valets Mr De Levis?

TREISURE. Robert, Sir.

WINSOR. When was he up last?

TREISURE. In the ordinary course of things, about ten o'clock, sir.

WINSOR. When did he go to bed?

TREISURE. I dismissed at eleven.

WINSOR. But did he go?

TREISURE. To the best of my knowledge. Is there anything I can do, sir?

WINSOR. [Disregarding a sign from DE LEVIS] Look here, Treisure, Mr De Levis has had a large sum of money taken from his bedroom within the last half hour.

TREISURE. Indeed, Sir!

WINSOR. Robert's quite all right, isn't he?

TREISURE. He is, sir.

DE LEVIS. How do you know?

TREISURE's eyes rest on DE LEVIS.

TREISURE. I am a pretty good judge of character, sir, if you'll excuse me.

WINSOR. Look here, De Levis, eighty or ninety notes must have been pretty bulky. You didn't have them on you at dinner?

DE LEVIS. No.

WINSOR. Where did you put them?

DE LEVIS. In a boot, and the boot in my suitcase, and locked it.

TREISURE smiles faintly.

WINSOR. [Again slightly outraged by such precautions in his house] And you found it locked – and took them from there to put under your pillow?

DE LEVIS. Yes.

WINSOR. Run your mind over things, Treisure – has any stranger been about?

TREISURE. No, Sir.

WINSOR. This seems to have happened between 11.15 and 11.30. Is that right? [DE LEVIS nods] Any noise-anything outside-anything suspicious anywhere?

TREISURE. [Running his mind – very still] No, sir.

WINSOR. What time did you shut up?

TREISURE. I should say about eleven-fifteen, sir. As soon as Major Colford and Captain Dancy had finished billiards. What was Mr De Levis doing out of his room, if I may ask, sir?

WINSOR. Having a bath; with his room locked and the key in his pocket.

TREISURE. Thank you, sir.

DE LEVIS. [Conscious of indefinable suspicion] Damn it! What do you mean? I WAS!

TREISURE. I beg your pardon, sir.

WINSOR. [Concealing a smile] Look here, Treisure, it's infernally awkward for everybody.

TREISURE. It is, sir.

WINSOR. What do you suggest?

TREISURE. The proper thing, sir, I suppose, would be a cordon and a complete search – in our interests.

WINSOR. I entirely refuse to suspect anybody.

TREISURE. But if Mr De Levis feels otherwise, sir?

DE LEVIS. [Stammering] I? All I know is – the money was there, and it's gone.

WINSOR. [Compunctious] Quite! It's pretty sickening for you. But so it is for anybody else. However, we must do our best to get it back for you.

A knock on the door.

WINSOR. Hallo!

TREISURE opens the door, and GENERAL. CANYNGE enters.

Oh! It's you, General. Come in. Adela's told you?

GENERAL CANYNGE nods. He is a slim man of about sixty, very well preserved, intensely neat and self-contained, and still in evening dress. His eyelids droop slightly, but his eyes are keen and his expression astute.

WINSOR. Well, General, what's the first move?

CANYNGE. [Lifting his eyebrows] Mr De Levis presses the matter?

DE Levis. [Flicked again] Unless you think it's too plebeian of me, General Canynge – a thousand pounds.

CANYNGE. [Drily] Just so! Then we must wait for the police, WINSOR. Lady Adela has got through to them. What height are these rooms from the ground, Treisure?

TREISURE. Twenty-three feet from the terrace, sir.

CANYNGE. Any ladders near?

TREISURE. One in the stables, Sir, very heavy. No others within three hundred yards.

CANYNGE. Just slip down, and see whether that's been moved.

TREISURE. Very good, General. [He goes out.]

DE LEVIS. [Uneasily] Of course, he – I suppose you —

WINSOR. We do.

CANYNGE. You had better leave this in our hands, De Levis.

DE LEVIS. Certainly; only, the way he —

WINSOR. [Curtly] Treisure has been here since he was a boy. I should as soon suspect myself.

DE LEVIS. [Looking from one to the other – with sudden anger] You seem to think – ! What was I to do? Take it lying down and let whoever it is get clear off? I suppose it's natural to want my money back?

CANYNGE looks at his nails; WINSOR out of the window.

WINSOR. [Turning] Of course, De Levis!

DE LEVIS. [Sullenly] Well, I'll go to my room. When the police come, perhaps you'll let me know. He goes out.

WINSOR. Phew! Did you ever see such a dressing-gown?

The door is opened. LADY ADELA and MARGARET ORME come in. The latter is a vivid young lady of about twenty-five in a vivid wrapper; she is smoking a cigarette.

LADY A. I've told the Dancys – she was in bed. And I got through to Newmarket, Charles, and Inspector Dede is coming like the wind on a motor cycle.

MARGARET. Did he say "like the wind," Adela? He must have imagination. Isn't this gorgeous? Poor little Ferdy!

WINSOR. [Vexed] You might take it seriously, Margaret; it's pretty beastly for us all. What time did you come up?

MARGARET. I came up with Adela. Am I suspected, Charles? How thrilling!

WINSOR. Did you hear anything?

MARGARET. Only little Ferdy splashing.

WINSOR. And saw nothing?

MARGARET. Not even that, alas!

LADY A. [With a finger held up] Leste! Un peu leste! Oh! Here are the Dancys. Come in, you two!

MABEL and RONALD DANCY enter. She is a pretty young woman with bobbed hair, fortunately, for she has just got out of bed, and is in her nightgown and a wrapper. DANCY is in his smoking jacket. He has a pale, determined face with high cheekbones, small, deep-set dark eyes, reddish crisp hair, and looks like a horseman.

WINSOR. Awfully sorry to disturb you, Mrs Dancy; but I suppose you and Ronny haven't heard anything. De Levis's room is just beyond Ronny's dressing-room, you know.

MABEL. I've been asleep nearly half an hour, and Ronny's only just come up.

CANYNGE. Did you happen to look out of your window, Mrs Dancy?

MABEL. Yes. I stood there quite five minutes.

CANYNGE. When?

MABEL. Just about eleven, I should think. It was raining hard then.

CANYNGE. Yes, it's just stopped. You saw nothing?

MABEL. No.

DANCY. What time does he say the money was taken?

WINSOR. Between the quarter and half past. He'd locked his door and had the key with him.

MARGARET. How quaint! Just like an hotel. Does he put his boots out?

LADY A. Don't be so naughty, Meg.

CANYNGE. When exactly did you come up, Dance?

DANCY. About ten minutes ago. I'd only just got into my dressing-room before Lady Adela came. I've been writing letters in the hall since Colford and I finished billiards.

CANYNGE. You weren't up for anything in between?

DANCY. No.

MARGARET. The mystery of the grey room.

DANCY. Oughtn't the grounds to be searched for footmarks?

CANYNGE. That's for the police.

DANCY. The deuce! Are they coming?

CANYNGE. Directly. [A knock] Yes?

TREISURE enters.

Well?

TREISURE. The ladder has not been moved, General. There isn't a sign.

WINSOR. All right. Get Robert up, but don't say anything to him. By the way, we're expecting the police.

TREISURE. I trust they will not find a mare's nest, sir, if I may say so.

He goes.

WINSOR. De Levis has got wrong with Treisure. [Suddenly] But, I say, what would any of us have done if we'd been in his shoes?

MARGARET. A thousand pounds? I can't even conceive having it.

DANCY. We probably shouldn't have found it out.

LADY A. No – but if we had.

DANCY. Come to you – as he did.

WINSOR. Yes; but there's a way of doing things.

CANYNGE. We shouldn't have wanted the police.

MARGARET. No. That's it. The hotel touch.

LADY A. Poor young man; I think we're rather hard on him.

WINSOR. He sold that weed you gave him, Dancy, to Kentman, the bookie, and these were the proceeds.

DANCY. Oh!

WINSOR. He'd tried her high, he said.

DANCY. [Grimly] He would.

MABEL. Oh! Ronny, what bad luck!

WINSOR. He must have been followed here. [At the window] After rain like that, there ought to be footmarks.

The splutter of a motor cycle is heard.

MARGARET. Here's the wind!

WINSOR. What's the move now, General?

CANYNGE. You and I had better see the Inspector in De Levis's room, WINSOR. [To the others] If you'll all be handy, in case he wants to put questions for himself.

MARGARET. I hope he'll want me; it's just too thrilling.

DANCY. I hope he won't want me; I'm dog-tired. Come on, Mabel. [He puts his arm in his wife's].

CANYNGE. Just a minute, Charles.

He draws dose to WINSOR as the others are departing to their rooms.

WINSOR. Yes, General?

CANYNGE. We must be careful with this Inspector fellow. If he pitches hastily on somebody in the house it'll be very disagreeable.

WINSOR. By Jove! It will.

CANYNGE. We don't want to rouse any ridiculous suspicion.

WINSOR. Quite. [A knock] Come in!

TREISURE enters.

TREISURE. Inspector Dede, Sir.

WINSOR. Show him in.

TREISURE. Robert is in readiness, sir; but I could swear he knows nothing about it.

WINSOR. All right.

TREISURE re-opens the door, and says "Come in, please." The INSPECTOR enters, blue, formal, moustachioed, with a peaked cap in his hand.

WINSOR. Good evening, Inspector. Sorry to have brought you out at this time of night.

INSPECTOR. Good evenin', sir. Mr WINSOR? You're the owner here, I think?

WINSOR. Yes. General Canynge.

INSPECTOR. Good evenin', General. I understand, a large sum of money?

WINSOR. Yes. Shall we go straight to the room it was taken from? One of my guests, Mr De Levis. It's the third room on the left.

CANYNGE. We've not been in there yet, Inspector; in fact, we've done nothing, except to find out that the stable ladder has not been moved. We haven't even searched the grounds.

INSPECTOR. Right, sir; I've brought a man with me.

They go out. CURTAIN. And interval of a Minute.

SCENE II

[The same set is used for this Scene, with the different arrangement of furniture, as specified.] The bedroom of DE LEVIS is the same in shape as WINSOR'S dressing-room, except that there is only one door – to the corridor. The furniture, however, is differently arranged; a small four-poster bedstead stands against the wall, Right Back, jutting into the room. A chair, on which DE LEVIS'S clothes are thrown, stands at its foot. There is a dressing-table against the wall to the left of the open windows, where the curtains are drawn back and a stone balcony is seen. Against the wall to the right of the window is a chest of drawers, and a washstand is against the wall, Left. On a small table to the right of the bed an electric reading lamp is turned up, and there is a light over the dressing-table. The INSPECTOR is standing plumb centre looking at the bed, and DE LEVIS by the back of the chair at the foot of the bed. WINSOR and CANYNGE are close to the door, Right Forward.

INSPECTOR. [Finishing a note] Now, sir, if this is the room as you left it for your bath, just show us exactly what you did after takin' the pocket-book from the suit case. Where was that, by the way?

DE LEVIS. [Pointing] Where it is now – under the dressing-table.

He comes forward to the front of the chair, opens the pocket-book, goes through the pretence of counting his shaving papers, closes the pocket-book, takes it to the head of the bed and slips it under the pillow. Makes the motion of taking up his pyjamas, crosses below the INSPECTOR to the washstand, takes up a bath sponge, crosses to the door, takes out the key, opens the door.

INSPECTOR. [Writing]. We now have the room as it was when the theft was committed. Reconstruct accordin' to 'uman nature, gentlemen – assumin' the thief to be in the room, what would he try first? – the clothes, the dressin'-table, the suit case, the chest of drawers, and last the bed.

He moves accordingly, examining the glass on the dressing-table, the surface of the suit cases, and the handles of the drawers, with a spy-glass, for finger-marks.

CANYNGE. [Sotto voce to WINSOR] The order would have been just the other way.

The INSPECTOR goes on hands and knees and examines the carpet between the window and the bed.

DE LEVIS. Can I come in again?

INSPECTOR. [Standing up] Did you open the window, sir, or was it open when you first came in?

DE LEVIS. I opened it.

INSPECTOR. Drawin' the curtains back first?

DE LEVIS. Yes.

INSPECTOR. [Sharply] Are you sure there was nobody in the room already?

DE LEVIS. [Taken aback] I don't know. I never thought. I didn't look under the bed, if you mean that.

INSPECTOR. [Jotting] Did not look under bed. Did you look under it after the theft?

DE LEVIS. No. I didn't.

INSPECTOR. Ah! Now, what did you do after you came back from your bath? Just give us that precisely.

DE LEVIS. Locked the door and left the key in. Put back my sponge, and took off my dressing-gown and put it there. [He points to the footrails of the bed] Then I drew the curtains, again.

INSPECTOR. Shutting the window?

DE LEVIS. No. I got into bed, felt for my watch to see the time. My hand struck the pocket-book, and somehow it felt thinner. I took it out, looked into it, and found the notes gone, and these shaving papers instead.

INSPECTOR. Let me have a look at those, sir. [He applies the spy-glasses] And then?

DE LEVIS. I think I just sat on the bed.

INSPECTOR. Thinkin' and cursin' a bit, I suppose. Ye-es?

DE LEVIS. Then I put on my dressing-gown and went straight to Mr WINSOR.

INSPECTOR. Not lockin' the door?

DE LEVIS. No.

INSPECTOR. Exactly. [With a certain finality] Now, sir, what time did you come up?

DE LEVIS. About eleven.

INSPECTOR. Precise, if you can give it me.

DE LEVIS. Well, I know it was eleven-fifteen when I put my watch under my pillow, before I went to the bath, and I suppose I'd been about a quarter of an hour undressing. I should say after eleven, if anything.

INSPECTOR. Just undressin'? Didn't look over your bettin' book?

DE LEVIS. No.

INSPECTOR. No prayers or anything?

DE LEVIS. No.

INSPECTOR. Pretty sloppy with your undressin' as a rule?

DE LEVIS. Yes. Say five past eleven.

INSPECTOR. Mr WINSOR, what time did the gentleman come to you?

WINSOR. Half-past eleven.

INSPECTOR. How do you fix that, sir?

WINSOR. I'd just looked at the time, and told my wife to send her maid off.

INSPECTOR. Then we've got it fixed between 11.15 and 11.30. [Jots] Now, sir, before we go further I'd like to see your butler and the footman that valets this gentleman.

WINSOR. [With distaste] Very well, Inspector; only – my butler has been with us from a boy.

INSPECTOR. Quite so. This is just clearing the ground, sir.

WINSOR. General, d'you mind touching that bell?

CANYNGE rings a bell by the bed.

INSPECTOR. Well, gentlemen, there are four possibilities. Either the thief was here all the time, waiting under the bed, and slipped out after this gentleman had gone to Mr WINSOR. Or he came in with a key that fits the lock; and I'll want to see all the keys in the house. Or he came in with a skeleton key and out by the window, probably droppin' from the balcony. Or he came in by the window with a rope or ladder and out the same way. [Pointing] There's a footmark here from a big boot which has been out of doors since it rained.

CANYNGE. Inspector – you er – walked up to the window when you first came into the room.

INSPECTOR. [Stiffly] I had not overlooked that, General.

CANYNGE. Of course.

A knock on the door relieves a certain tension,

WINSOR. Come in.

The footman ROBERT, a fresh-faced young man, enters, followed by TREISURE.

INSPECTOR. You valet Mr – Mr De Levis, I think?

ROBERT. Yes, sir.

INSPECTOR. At what time did you take his clothes and boots?

ROBERT. Ten o'clock, sir.

INSPECTOR. [With a pounce] Did you happen to look under his bed?

ROBERT. No, sir.

INSPECTOR. Did you come up again, to bring the clothes back?

ROBERT. No, sir; they're still downstairs.

INSPECTOR. Did you come up again for anything?

ROBERT. No, Sir.

INSPECTOR. What time did you go to bed?

ROBERT. Just after eleven, Sir.

INSPECTOR. [Scrutinising him] Now, be careful. Did you go to bed at all?

ROBERT. No, Sir.

INSPECTOR. Then why did you say you did? There's been a theft here, and anything you say may be used against you.

ROBERT. Yes, Sir. I meant, I went to my room.

INSPECTOR. Where is your room?

ROBERT. On the ground floor, at the other end of the right wing, sir.

WINSOR. It's the extreme end of the house from this, Inspector. He's with the other two footmen.

INSPECTOR. Were you there alone?

ROBERT. No, Sir. Thomas and Frederick was there too.

TREISURE. That's right; I've seen them.

INSPECTOR. [Holding up his hand for silence] Were you out of the room again after you went in?

ROBERT. No, Sir.

INSPECTOR. What were you doing, if you didn't go to bed?

ROBERT. [To WINSOR] Beggin' your pardon, Sir, we were playin' Bridge.

INSPECTOR. Very good. You can go. I'll see them later on.

ROBERT. Yes, Sir. They'll say the same as me. He goes out, leaving a smile on the face of all except the INSPECTOR and DE LEVIS.

INSPECTOR. [Sharply] Call him back.

TREISURE calls "Robert," and the FOOTMAN re-enters.

ROBERT. Yes, Sir?

INSPECTOR. Did you notice anything particular about Mr De Levis's clothes?

ROBERT. Only that they were very good, Sir.

INSPECTOR. I mean – anything peculiar?

ROBERT. [After reflection] Yes, Sir.

INSPECTOR. Well?

ROBERT. A pair of his boots this evenin' was reduced to one, sir.

INSPECTOR. What did you make of that?

ROBERT. I thought he might have thrown the other at a cat or something.

INSPECTOR. Did you look for it?

ROBERT. No, Sir; I meant to draw his attention to it in the morning.

INSPECTOR. Very good.

ROBERT. Yes, Sir. [He goes again.]

INSPECTOR. [Looking at DE LEVIS] Well, sir, there's your story corroborated.

DE LEVIS. [Stiffly] I don't know why it should need corroboration, Inspector.

INSPECTOR. In my experience, you can never have too much of that. [To WINSOR] I understand there's a lady in the room on this side [pointing Left] and a gentleman on this [pointing Right] Were they in their rooms?

WINSOR. Miss Orme was; Captain Dancy not.

INSPECTOR. Do they know of the affair?

WINSOR. Yes.

INSPECTOR. Well, I'd just like the keys of their doors for a minute. My man will get them.

He goes to the door, opens it, and speaks to a constable in the corridor.

[To TREISURE] You can go with him.

TREISURE goes Out.

In the meantime I'll just examine the balcony.

He goes out on the balcony, followed by DE LEVIS.

WINSOR. [To CANYNGE] Damn De Levis and his money! It's deuced invidious, all this, General.

CANYNGE. The Inspector's no earthly.

There is a simultaneous re-entry of the INSPECTOR from the balcony and of TREISURE and the CONSTABLE from the corridor.

CONSTABLE. [Handing key] Room on the left, Sir. [Handing key] Room on the right, sir.

The INSPECTOR tries the keys in the door, watched with tension by the others. The keys fail.

INSPECTOR. Put them back.

Hands keys to CONSTABLE, who goes out, followed by TREISURE.

I'll have to try every key in the house, sir.

WINSOR. Inspector, do you really think it necessary to disturb the whole house and knock up all my guests? It's most disagreeable, all this, you know. The loss of the money is not such a great matter. Mr De Levis has a very large income.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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