

# THE VALLEY OF GHOSTS



EDGAR WALLACE



**THE VALLEY OF GHOSTS**  
**BY**  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<a href="#">Chapter I</a>
<a href="#">Chapter II</a>
<a href="#">Chapter III</a>
<a href="#">Chapter IV</a>
<a href="#">Chapter V</a>
<a href="#">Chapter VI</a>
<a href="#">Chapter VII</a>
<a href="#">Chapter VIII</a>
<a href="#">Chapter IX</a>
<a href="#">Chapter X</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XI</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XII</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XIII</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XIV</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XV</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XVI</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XVII</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XVIII</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XIX</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XX</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XXI</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XXII</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XXIII</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XXIV</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XXV</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XXVI</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XXVII</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XXVIII</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XXIX</a>
<a href="#">Chapter XXX</a>

[Chapter XXXI](#)  
[Chapter XXXII](#)

## CHAPTER I

Fate and an easy-running Spanz brought Andrew Macleod to the environs of Beverley. The town itself was at the end of a reluctant branch line, and had no visible excuse for existence, or means of support. Yet, for some extraordinary reason, the people of Beverley did not starve and the queer little shops that formed its one, broad, shaded street had the appearance of prosperity. This it could not have drawn from its aristocratic suburb, for Beverley Green had its supplies from the great department stores elsewhere, and came only to the town for such stocks as had been overlooked in the ordering.

Andy brought his long-bonneted car to a rest before the post office and got down. In five minutes he was chatting to headquarters, and the subject of his conversation was Allison John Wicker, alias Four-Eyed Scottie, from his practice of wearing spectacles. Scottie was one of the few men of his profession who enjoyed walking. When the manager of the Regent Diamond Syndicate came to his office one morning and found that somebody had saved him the bother of opening the large fire- and thief-resisting safe by means of an acetylene blower, it was as clearly Scottie's work as though he had left his receipt for the seven parcels of stones he had taken. Railway stations and ports of embarkation were instantly picketed by extra police, hotels were visited, and all constabularies warned.

Andy Macleod, spending his holiday with a fishing-rod and an accumulation of books which he had not time to read during the year, was dragged away from his recreation to organise the search.

He had started life as Dr Macleod, an assistant pathologist at headquarters, and had drifted into the profession of thief-catcher without exactly knowing how. Officially he was still a pathologist, a man to be called to the witness stand to testify the manner of deceased's death; unofficially, though they called him 'sir', he was 'Andy' to the youngest policeman that walked a beat.

"He passed through Panton Mills three days ago on a walking tour. I'm pretty certain it was Scottie," he said. "I'm quartering the country between here and Three Lakes. The local police swear that he hasn't been near Beverley, which means that he must have been living under their noses. They are a bright lot; asked me if he had done anything wrong, and they have had full particulars of the theft and a description of Scottie for a week."

A girl walked into the post office at this moment. Glancing sideways through the glass panel of the telephone booth, Andy noted her admiringly. Attractive—pretty—beautiful? To all men, all women look their best in tailored costumes of severe cut. She was tall for a woman; slim, but not thin.

"Yes, I think so," he answered his chief mechanically, his eyes on the girl.

She raised her hand, and he saw a ring on the engagement finger; a gold ring with little emeralds, or they may have been sapphires—no, they were emeralds. He caught the sea-green of them.

He had opened the door of the booth an inch after the more secret portion of his report had been made, and with one free ear he caught the murmur of her voice.

More than pretty, he decided, and admired the profile turned towards him.

And then a curious thing happened. She must have looked at him when his eyes were turned. Possibly she asked who he was; more likely the garrulous old postmaster, to whom Andy had shown his card to facilitate his call, volunteered the information. Andy heard the word 'detective'. >From where he stood he had a clear view of her face.

"Detective!" she no more than whispered the word, but he heard—and saw. Her hands gripped the edge of the counter and the colour went out of her face, leaving it a deathly white. Even the lips changed their hue queerly.

So intent, so startled was he, that he took the receiver from his ear, and at that moment she turned and met his gaze. Fear, panic, horror were in those eyes. He had a sense of something trapped and tortured as he stared at her, open-mouthed. Her eyes left his, and she fumbled at the money on the counter, the change the old man had put there, her hands shaking so that at last she scooped the coins into her palm and went out of the office hurriedly.

Unconscious of the fact that at the other end of the wire a puzzled police

official was tapping the receiver urgently, having his own views to express, Andy hung up and passed into the shop.

"Who was that lady?" he asked as he paid the telephone charge.

"That, sir? Why, that's Miss Nelson, from the Green—Beverley Green, over by the hills. Wonderful place; you ought to see it. Lot of rich people live there. Mr Boyd Salter, you've heard of him? And Mr Merrivan, he's a rich man, too, though he's a bit mean, and oh, a lot of swell people. It's a sort of a—what do you call it? A garden city, that's what it is. Some of the biggest houses in the country. Mr Nelson's family lived there for years, long before there was any garden city. Remember his grandfather; a fine old fellow he was."

The postmaster was prepared to offer detailed biographies of the favoured folk who lived at Beverley Green, and Andy was anxious to catch another glimpse of the girl, and cut short the explanation.

He saw her walking quickly down the middle of the road, and guessed that she was on her way to the railway station.

He was puzzled and irritated. How might he explain her agitation? What had she to fear from detectives? What folly, big or small, had been responsible for the cold terror that had come to her eyes?

It was a waste of time to consider the cause. The folk of these little towns, picturesque, aloof from the world, where the stream of life seemed so idyllic and unruffled by the great passion storms which lash the surfaces of the cities, must inevitably experience crises no less tragic than these which disturb the people of the greater world. But—

The word 'detective', implying, as it would, the secret investigations of the law, holds no discomfort for normal, law-abiding people.

"Humph!" said Andy, and rubbed his smooth chin. "This won't catch Scottie!"

He drove the car out of the village, intending to push forward to the main road and begin his quartering of the network of secondary feeders which lie to the south from a point twenty miles away.

Slowing to take a sharp bend, a mile or more from Beverley, he saw an

opening in the hedge to the right. There was a broad, gravelled boulevard flanked by trees; the paths, bordered by well-trimmed turf, curved out of view. An artistic signpost said "Private Road to Beverley Green".

His speed had carried him beyond the opening, and he backed, looked thoughtfully at the sign, then turned into the drive. It was hardly likely that Scottie would pass into what was probably a dead end. On the other hand, Scottie was a versatile genius and a great opportunist. And Beverley Green was a rich community. So Andy told himself by way of excuse, though in his heart he knew that his curiosity had its causation in a new interest. He wanted to see the house in which she lived. What kind of style did Miss Nelson keep up?

The drive twisted and turned and at last took a sharper turn than usual, and Beverley Green, in all its summery beauty, came suddenly into view. Andy reduced speed to a walking pace. Before him was a broad space. It was almost flat, and was fringed with an unbroken border of flowering shrubs. Within a dozen yards from the drive was a tee, an indication of a golf course which probably extended along the valley. Set about the green, half revealed through the trees which surrounded them, were a dozen houses. A glimpse of a gable, a flash of a white-sashed window, a hint of timbering, the upstanding lift of a twisted Elizabethan chimney, indicated the type of architecture.

Andy looked around for somebody to question. The road bent sharply left and right from where he sat, and at the corner was a quaintly shingled building which suggested a club. He guessed it was a notice-board attached to the gatepost, and was getting out of the car to investigate further when a man came into view around the corner on which the building was situated.

"Prosperous city merchant—retired," said Andy mentally. "Black alpaca coat, broad-toed shoes, stiff collar, and a double watch-guard. Probably pompous, and wondering what the devil I mean by trespassing in these Elysian fields."

Certainly the newcomer eyed the intruder gravely, though it would be an exaggeration to say that he looked in any way resentful.

His age might have been anything between forty-five and sixty. The big, smooth face was unlined, and his gait was alert to the point of briskness. A big man, he supported his stoutness so well that Andy did not notice that he was inclined to fat until some time later.



The greeting he offered dispelled any doubt of welcome that the visitor may have harboured.

"Good morning, sir," he said. "You seem to be looking for somebody. The Green is a difficult locality for strangers; our houses have no names or numbers."

He laughed sedately.

"I am not looking for anybody in particular," said Andy, giving smile for smile. "I was led here by curiosity. It is a beautiful spot. I heard about it at Beverley."

The other inclined his head.

"We get very few visitors—I nearly said 'happily', but that would be unkind. The estate is privately owned by myself and my neighbours, and we have no inn to tempt visitors to stay. A guest-house." He waved his hand to the wisteria-covered building which Andy had thought might be a club. "We maintain that for visitors. Sometimes we cannot accommodate all our friends, and sometimes we have a distinguished—ah—person who is, so to speak, the guest of our little community. At present, for example," he went on, "we have an eminent Canadian geologist."

"Happy man," smiled Andy, "and happy community. Are all these houses occupied?"

He asked the question well knowing that every house would be in occupation, but anticipating the form a reply would take.

"Oh indeed, yes. That last house on the left is Mr Pearson's, the great architect, now of course retired. The next house with the gables is Mr Wilmot's, a gentleman who is—er—well, I don't know what he is, even though he is my nephew—shall we say something in the city? The next house, where you see the rambler roses, is Mr Nelson's—Kenneth Leonard Nelson, of whom you must have heard."

"The artist?" Andy was interested.

"Exactly. A great artist. He has a studio, but you cannot see it from here; it is on the northern side. Artists, I understand, prefer the northern light. The house on the far corner—you may not observe the corner from here, but there

is a lane at the side leading to the tennis courts—that is my feudal mansion," he chuckled good-humouredly.

"What is that big mansion on the side of the hill?" asked Andy.

So her father was Nelson the artist. Now what had he heard about Nelson the artist? The name suggested something unpleasant.

"That house on the hill?" replied the guide. "That, unhappily, is not of our community. It is, in fact, the real feudal castle around which we humble—er—peasants have built our hovels."

The conceit seemed to please him, and he repeated, "Built our hovels," before he went on: "That is Mr Boyd Salter's place. The family has lived here or hereabouts for centuries, sir. The Salters come down from—well, I won't inflict their history upon you. Mr Boyd Salter is a very rich man, but a semi-invalid."

Andy nodded and the other went on:

"There is our guest. Professor Bellingham. My name, by the way, is Merrivan."

So this was Mr Merrivan. "Rich, but a bit mean," was the description the postmaster gave.

Andy was eyeing the approaching figure of the Canadian geologist—a spare man in baggy breeches with a studious stoop.

"Been out on the hills collecting fossils. Quite a number have been found here," explained Mr Merrivan.

"I think I know him rather well," said Andy, more than interested.

He walked across to meet the professor, and when they were separated by a few yards the geologist looked up and stopped.

"Hard lines, Scottie," said Andrew Macleod, with ill-simulated sorrow. "Are you going to make a fuss, or shall I take you somewhere to lunch?"

"Logic is my weakness," confessed Scottie, "and if you'll let me go up to my room to pack a few articles of raiment I'll step along with you. I see you've got a car, but I'd rather walk."

Andy said nothing, but when they joined Mr Merrivan: "The professor is

going to show me some of his specimens," he said pleasantly, "and thank you very much, Mr Merrivan, for your kindness and courtesy."

"Perhaps you will come back one day and let me show you round?" invited the big man.

"I should be delighted," answered Andy, and meant it.

He followed Scottie up the oaken stairs of the guest-house to the delightful little room that he had occupied for two days.

"Scepticism is the curse of this age," said Scottie bitterly. "Do you think I wouldn't have come back if you'd let me go alone to my room?"

There were times when Scottie was childish, and Andy Macleod did not trouble to reply.

The lank man stepped into the car, wearing on his countenance an expression of sheer distaste.

"There are too many motor cars in these days," he complained. "Lack of exercise is killing thousands every day. What do you want me for, Mac? Whatever it is, I've got an alibi."

"Where did you find it? With the fossils?" demanded his captor, and Scottie relapsed into a dignified silence.

## CHAPTER II

With Scottie lodged in the adequate lock-up, Andy discovered that there were certain formalities that need be gone through before his prisoner could be transferred to the area where he must answer for his sins.

"Where can I find one?" asked Andy, when he was told that the transfer must be approved and ordered by the local justice.

"Well, sir," meditated the sergeant of police, "there's Mr. Staining, but he's ill; and there's Mr James Bolter, but he's on his holidays, and there's Mr Carrol, but, now I come to think of it, he's gone up to the horse show. He breeds—"

Andy interrupted him.

"There is something in the air of this place which makes people talkative, sergeant," he said patiently, "but perhaps I was a little obscure. I don't want the names of the men who aren't here. Is there anybody in the neighbourhood who is on the Commission of the Peace?"

"There is one gentleman," emphasised the sergeant. "Mr Boyd Salter. He'll sign the order." He added: "If he's at home."

Andy grinned, and went in search of Mr Boyd Salter.

He found that the nearest way to the house avoided Beverley Green; in fact, Mr Salter's demesne ran well into Beverley, and was reached through a pair of lodge gates at the end of the town. He had seen them before and wondered who lived beyond them.

Beverley Hall was a handsome mansion of the type that Inigo Jones had made famous.

It was a house of silence. The first sound he heard as he was taken into a spacious, stone-flagged hall was the ticking of a clock. The man-servant moved noiselessly to carry Andy's visiting card, and Andy saw that he wore

rubber-soled shoes. He was a long time gone, and when he returned he beckoned the caller forward.

"Mr Salter is a martyr to nerve trouble, sir," he whispered. "If you would speak quietly to him he would be obliged, I am sure."

Andy expected to meet an invalid, and had a vision of a trembling figure propped in a cushioned chair. Instead, he found a healthy-looking man of fifty, who looked up quickly as, unannounced, Andy was shown into the room.

"Good afternoon, Mr Macleod. What can I do for you? I see you are on police business," he said, examining the card.

Andy explained the reason for his visit.

"You needn't lower your voice," smiled the other. "I suppose Tilling told you? Sometimes I am rather jumpy, but this is one of my good days." He looked at the document which Andy put before him and signed it. "Our friend is the jewel burglar, isn't he?" he said. "Where has he been hiding?"

"In your garden city," said Andy, and a frown puckered Mr Salter's handsome face.

"Beverley Green? At the guest-house, of course?"

Andy nodded. "Did you meet any of the citizens?"

"One; Mr Merrivan." There was nothing said for a little while, then: "A curious lot of people. Wilmot is a rum fish. I can't quite get the measure of him. I've often thought he was an aristocratic burglar. What is the name of that fellow in the book—Ruffles? Ah, Raffles, that's it! A queer fish, Wilmot. Then there's Nelson. There is a weird fellow! Drinks like the devil! He'd drink the sea dry."

It was then Andy remembered the story he had heard about the artist.

"He has a daughter," he suggested.

"Ah, yes. Nice girl; very pretty. Wilmot is engaged to her or something of the sort. My son is a great news-gatherer when he's at home. He ought to be in the police service—at school now. H'm."

He looked down at the warrant, blotted it, and passed it across to Andy.



"Mr Merrivan seems a very nice man," he suggested.

The justice shook his head.

"Know nothing about him whatever," he said. "I've just said 'How d'ye do' to him, nothing more. He appears an inoffensive gentleman. Rather a bore, but inoffensive. Talks too fluently; everybody does in Beverley."

To emphasise this local weakness he went on, without stopping, to give the history of Beverley and its people. Presently he spoke of the Hall.

"Yes, it's a beautiful little place, but the estate is a very expensive one to keep up. I've not been able to do what I should have done, if—"

He looked quickly away, as though he feared his visitor could read his thoughts. It was some time before he spoke again. "Have you ever associated with the devil, Mr Macleod?"

He was not joking. The look he shot at Andy was straight and stern.

"I have associated with a number of minor devils," smiled Andy, "but I cannot lay claim to knowing the father of them."

The eyes of Mr Salter did not waver. They fixed Andy absently, it is true, but steadfastly, for fully thirty seconds.

"There is a man in London called Abraham Selim," he said, speaking slowly, "who is a devil. I am not telling you this as a police officer. I don't know why I am telling you at all. I think it comes of a natural association of ideas. I have had to sign many orders of arrest, but never once have I put pen to paper without thinking of this greatest of criminals. He is a murderer—a murderer!"

Andy, startled, moved in his chair.

"He has killed men; broken their hearts; ground them into the earth. He had a friend of mine like that!" He clasped his hand tight until the knuckles showed white.

"Abraham Selim?" Andy could think of nothing else to say, and his host nodded.

"If, as I believe, he will one day make a slip and fall into your hands, send me word. No, no, I don't mean that; he will never be trapped!"

"Is he Semitic—or Turkish? His name suggests both origins."

Boyd Salter shook his head.

"I've never seen him. I've not met anybody who has," he said surprisingly.

"Now off you go, Mr Macleod. What is your rank, by the way?"

"I've been trying to discover for years," said Andy. "I'm by way of being a medical."

"A doctor?"

Andy nodded.

"I do a lot of analytical work. I'm a sort of assistant pathologist."

Boyd Salter smiled.

"Then I should have called you 'Doctor'," he said. "Edinburgh, of course."

Andy agreed.

"I've a weakness for doctors. My nerves are—terrible. Is there any cure?"

"Psycho-analysis," said Andy promptly. "It enables you to take out your inhibited worries and stare 'em out of countenance. Goodbye, sir."

There was no more effectual way of giving Andy Macleod his conge than to talk medicines with him.

"Goodbye—er—Doctor. You look very young for such a position—thirty or thirty-one?"

"You suggested midway, sir," laughed Andy, and went out.

## CHAPTER III

Stella Nelson left the post office in a panic. Though she did not turn her head, she was conscious that the good-looking, strong-faced man she had seen in the telephone box was looking after her. What would he think, he, a man to whom, in all probability, the flicker of an eyelash had significance? She had nearly swooned at the shock of that word 'detective', and he had seen her sway and turn pale, and must have wondered what was the cause.

She wanted to run, and it required all her reserve of will to keep her from increasing her already hurried pace. She went rapidly down the declivity to the railway station and found she had half an hour to wait, and only then remembered that when she had left the house she had given herself time to order a number of commodities that were required for the kitchen. Should she go back? Dare she face the grave scrutiny which had so terrified her?

Eventually she did go back. The spur of self-contempt urged her, yet she was relieved to discover that the blue car had gone. She hurried from store to store with her orders, and then, after a moment's hesitation, went across to the post office and bought some stamps.

"What did you say that man was?"

With an effort she kept her voice steady.

"A detective, miss," said the old postmaster with relish. "You could have knocked me down with a feather duster when he showed me his card. I don't know what he's after."

"Where has he gone?" she asked, dreading the reply.

"He's gone up to Beverley Green, Miss, according to what he told me."

The postmaster's memory was not of the brightest, or he would have recalled the fact that Andy had expressed no such intention.

"To Beverley Green?" she said slowly.

"That's it, miss—Macleod!" he said suddenly. "That's the name. I couldn't remember it. Macleod." He pronounced it "Mac-lo-ed."

"Macleod," she corrected him. "Is he staying here?"

"No, miss, he's just passing through. Banks, the butcher, wouldn't believe that we had a detective in the town—a real man from headquarters. He's the fellow who gave evidence in that Marchmont poisoning murder. Do you remember it, miss? A wonderful murder it was, too. A man poisoned his wife, being anxious to marry another lady, and this Macleod's evidence got him hanged. Banks told me that, but I remembered it the moment he spoke. I've got a wonderful memory for murder cases."

She went back at a more leisurely pace to the station and took a ticket. She was undecided, tormented by doubt and fear. She hated the idea of going away from the place, even for a few hours, whilst that man was prying into heaven knows what, she told herself fretfully.

Again she walked back towards the village, and then she heard the scream of the train whistle. No, she would carry out her original idea. One danger at any rate was definite. She hated Macleod. He was an enemy. She hated him, but she feared him too. She shivered at the recollection of that inquiring stare of his, which said so plainly: "You have something to fear." She tried hard to read, but her mind was never upon the newspaper, and, though her eyes followed the lines, she saw nothing, read nothing.

Nearing her destination, she wondered that she had ever dreamt of going back. She had only a week to settle this ghastly business of hers—exactly a week—and every day counted. She might be successful. She might be returning that afternoon, her heart singing with happiness, passing by these very fields and bridges, her mind at peace.

Mechanically she noticed the objects of the landscape as the train flashed through. She must remember to register her emotions when they came to that white farmhouse on the return journey. By the time she saw it again she might not have a care in the world.

Dreams and journey ended simultaneously. She hurried out through the big terminus, crowded with jostling, horrible people, who would not so much as turn their heads if she died that moment. A taxi-cab came to her signal.

"Ashlar Building?" he pondered, and then: "I know where you mean, miss."

The Ashlar Building was a great block of offices; she had never seen it before, and had no idea as to how she was to find the man on whom she was calling. Inside the hall, however, and covering both walls, was an indicator, and her eyes went down column after column of names until they stopped.

309, Abraham Selim.

The office was on the fifth floor.

It was some time before she found it, for it stood in a corner of a long wing—two office doors, one marked private, the other abr. selim.

She knocked at the door, and a voice said:

"Come in."

A small rail separated the office from the narrow gangway in which callers were permitted to stand.

"Yes, miss?"

The man who advanced to her was brusque and a little hostile.

"I want to see Mr Selim," she said, and the young man shook his well-pomaded head.

"You can't see him, miss, without an appointment," he said, "and even then he won't talk to you." He stopped suddenly and stared at her. "Why, Miss Nelson!" he said. "I never expected to see you here."

She flushed, and strove vainly to recall where he had ever seen her.

"You remember me, miss—Sweeny," he said, and her face went a deeper red.

"Why, of course. Sweeny."

She was embarrassed, humiliated, at this discovery.

"You left Mr Merrivan's service rather hurriedly, didn't you?"

He was uncomfortable in his turn.

"Yes, I did, miss." He coughed. "I had a bit of a disagreement with Mr Merrivan. A very mean gentleman, and awfully suspicious." He coughed again. "Did you hear nothing, miss?"



She shook her head. The Nelsons did not keep their servants long enough to reach the stage of intimacy where they could gossip with them, even if they were so inclined.

"Well, the fact is," said Sweeny, a trifle relieved that he had the opportunity of getting in his version first, "Mr Merrivan missed some silver. Very foolishly I had lent it to a brother of mine to copy. He was very interested in old silver, being a working jeweller, and when Mr Merrivan missed the silver—" He coughed again, and grew weakly incoherent. He had been accused of stealing—he! And he had been fired without ado. "I'd have been starving now, miss, only Mr Selim got to hear of me and gave me this job. It is not much," he added deprecatingly, "but it is something. I often wish I was back in the happy valley. That's what I always called Beverley Green."

She cut short his flow of explanation and reminiscence.

"When can I see Mr Selim?" she asked.

He shook his head. "I can't tell you that, miss. I've never seen him myself."

"What!" she said, staring at him in amazement.

"It's a fact, miss. He's a moneylender—why, of course, I needn't tell you that."

He looked knowingly at her, and she felt ready to sink through the floor from very shame.

"All his business is done by letter. I receive visitors and fix appointments. Not that he ever keeps them," he said, "but the clients fill in blanks—you understand, miss, the amount of money they want, the security they can offer, and all that sort of thing—and I leave them here in that safe for Mr Selim when he comes."

"When does he come?"

"God knows," said the other piously. "He must come, because the letters are taken away two or three times a week. He communicates with the people himself. I never know how much they borrow or how much they pay back."

"But when he wants to give instructions does he write them?" asked the girl, her curiosity getting the better of her disappointment.

"He telephones. I don't know where from. It's a queer job. Only two hours a

day, and only four days a week."

"Is there no possibility of seeing him?" she asked desperately.

"Not a scrap," said Sweeny, becoming important again. "There's only one way of conducting business with Abe—he wouldn't be mad if he knew I called him Abe, not at all—and that is by correspondence."

She dropped her eyes to the counter and stood awhile thinking.

"Is Mr Nelson quite well, miss?" asked Sweeny.

"Very well, thank you," she said hastily. "Thank you, Sweeny. I—" It was hateful to take a servant into her confidence. "You won't mention the fact that you saw me here?"

"Certainly not," said the virtuous Sweeny. "Lord, miss, if you knew the people who come up here you would be surprised. Actors and actresses, people you read about in the daily papers, ministers, religious ones—"

"Goodbye, Sweeny."

She closed the door on his recital.

Her knees wobbled as she walked down the stairs, which she took in preference to the lift, for she knew now just how much she had counted upon the interview. With despair in her heart she saw the iron inevitability of everything. What could now arrest the sword already swinging for the blow? Nothing, nothing! The man she wanted she could not reach—the only man, she told herself bitterly, the only man!

Looking up on the journey back she saw the white farmhouse and could have wept.

She changed at the junction and arrived at Beverley at five o'clock, and the first person she saw as she stepped off the train was the calm, capable, grey-eyed man. He had seen her first, and his eyes were on hers when she stepped down. For a second her heart stood still, and then she saw at his side the man with the handcuffs on his wrist—the Canadian professor! So that was whom he was after—the Canadian professor, who had talked so entertainingly on fossils.

Scottie knew a great deal about fossils; it was his favourite subject. In prison, if one takes up a subject, one usually discovers three or four books in the

library that have a bearing upon the matter. On Scottie's other side stood a uniformed policeman. As for the criminal, he met her horrified glance with a bland smile. She supposed that people got callous and hardened after a while, and the shame of captivity ceased to be. But there must have been a time when even that lean-faced man would have dropped his eyes before the gaze of a woman who had so much as spoken to him.

She glanced quickly at Andy and went on. The relief! The dismal despair of the return journey was lightened. She was almost cheerful as she came up the rose-bordered path to the door.