

JUDGE. Miss MacKenzie, would you please address your remarks to the Jury.

MYERS. What sort of a person was Miss French?

JANET. She was a warm-hearted body – too warm-hearted at times, I'm thinking. A wee bit impulsive too. There was times when she'd have no sense at all, She was easily flattered, you see.

MYERS. When did you first see the prisoner, Leonard Vole?

JANET. He came to the house, I mind, at the end of August.

MYERS. How often did he come to the house?

JANET. To begin with once a week, but later it was oftener. Two and even three times he'd come. He'd sit there flattering her, telling her how young she looked and noticing any new clothes she was wearing.

MYERS. (*rather hastily*) Quite, quite. Now will you tell the Jury in your own words, Miss MacKenzie, about the events of October the fourteenth.

JANET. It was a Friday and my night out. I was going round to see some friends of mine in Glenister Road, which is not above three minutes' walk, I left the house at half past seven. I'd promised to take my friend the pattern of a knitted cardigan that she'd admired. When I got there I found I'd left it behind, so after supper I said I'd slip back and get it as it was a fine night and no distance. I got back to the house at twenty-five past nine. I let myself in with my key and went upstairs to my room. As I passed the sitting-room door I heard the prisoner in there talking to Miss French.

MYERS. You were sure it was the prisoner you heard?

JANET. Aye, I know his voice well enough. With him calling so often. An agreeable voice it was, I'll not say it wasn't. Talking and laughing they were. But it was no business of mine so I went up and fetched the pattern, came down and let myself out and went back to my friend.

MYERS. Now I want these times very exact. You say that you re-entered the house at twenty-five past nine.

JANET. Aye. It was just after twenty past nine when I left Glenister Road.

MYERS. How do you know that, Miss MacKenzie?

JANET. By the clock on my friend's mantelpiece, and I compared it with my watch and the time was the same.

MYERS. You say it takes three or four minutes to walk to the house, so that you entered the house at twenty-five minutes past nine, and you were there...

JANET. I was there under ten minutes. It took me a few minutes to search for the pattern as I wasna' sure where I'd left it.

MYERS. And what did you do next?

JANET. I went back to my friend in Glenister Road. She was delighted with the pattern, simply delighted. I stayed there until twenty to eleven, then I said good night to them and came home. I went into the sitting-room then to see if the mistress wanted anything before she went to bed.

MYERS. What did you see?

JANET. She was there on the floor, poor body, her head beaten in. And all the drawers of the bureau out on the ground, everything tossed hither and thither, the broken vase on the floor and the curtains flying in the wind.

MYERS. What did you do?

JANET. I rang the police.

MYERS. Did you really think that a burglary had occurred?

SIR WILFRID. (*jumping up*) Really, my lord, I must protest.

(*He sits.*)

JUDGE. I will not allow that question to be answered, Mr. Myers. It should not have been put to the witness.

MYERS. Then let me ask you this, Miss MacKenzie. What did you do after you had telephoned the police?

JANET. I searched the house.

MYERS. What for?

JANET. For an intruder.

MYERS. Did you find one?

JANET. I did not. Nor any signs of disturbance save in the sitting-room.

MYERS. How much did you know about the prisoner, Leonard Vole?

JANET. I knew that he needed money.

MYERS. Did he ask Miss French for money?

JANET. He was too clever for that.

MYERS. Did he help Miss French with her business affairs – with her income tax returns, for instance?

JANET. Aye – not that there was any need of it.

MYERS. What do you mean by not any need of it?

JANET. Miss French had a good, clear head for business.

MYERS. Were you aware of what arrangements Miss French had made for the disposal of her money in the event of her death?

JANET. She'd make a will as the fancy took her. She was a rich woman and she had a lot of money to leave and no near relatives. "It must go where it can do the most good," she would say. Once it was to orphans she left it, and once to an old people's home; and another time a dispensary for cats and dogs, but it always came to the same in the end. She'd quarrel with the people and then she'd come home and tear up the will and make a new one.

MYERS. Do you know when she made her last will?

JANET. She made it on October the eighth. I heard her speaking to Mr. Stokes, the lawyer. Saying he was to come tomorrow, she was making a new will. He was there at the time – the prisoner, I mean, kind of protesting, saying, "No, no."

(LEONARD hastily scribbles a note.)

And the mistress said, "But I want to, my dear boy. I want to. Remember that day I was nearly run over by a bus. It might happen any time."

(LEONARD leans over the dock and hands the note to MAYHEW, who passes it to SIR WILFRID.)

MYERS. Do you know when your mistress made a will previous to that one?

JANET. In the spring it was.

MYERS. Were you aware, Miss MacKenzie, that Leonard Vole was a married man?

JANET. No, indeed. Neither was the mistress.

SIR WILFRID. (rising) I object. What Miss French knew or did not know is pure conjecture on Janet MacKenzie's part. (He sits.)

MYERS. Let us put it this way: You formed the opinion that Miss French thought Leonard Vole a single man? Have you any facts to support that opinion?

JANET. There was the books she ordered from the library. There was *The Life of Baroness Burdett Coutts* and one about Disraeli and his wife. Both of them about women who'd married men years younger than themselves. I knew what she was thinking.

JUDGE. I'm afraid we cannot admit that.

JANET. Why?

JUDGE. Members of the Jury, it is possible for a woman to read *The Life of Disraeli* without contemplating marriage with a man younger than herself.

MYERS. Did Mr. Vole ever mention a wife?

JANET. Never.

MYERS. Thank you. (He sits.)

SIR WILFRID. (Rises. Gently and kindly.) I think we all appreciate how very devoted to your mistress you were.

JANET. Aye – I was.

SIR WILFRID. You had great influence over her?

JANET. Aye – maybe.

SIR WILFRID. In the last will Miss French made – that is to say the one made last spring, Miss French left almost the whole of her fortune to you. Were you aware of that fact?