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THE RASP

A Detective Story

by

PHILIP MACDONALD

Author of "Gentleman Bill," etc.

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You'd agree with me if you'd been here long enough to sift what evidence there is and been able the way I have to see *and* talk to all the people instead of hearing about them sketchy and second-hand as it were."

Anthony looked at him. "There's certainly something in that, Boyd. But it'll take a lot to shift me. Mind you, my predilection for the 'insider' isn't a conviction. But it's my fancy—and strong."

Boyd fumbled in his breast-pocket. "Then you just take a good look at this, sir." He held out some folded sheets of foolscap. "I made that out before you got here this morning. It'll tell you better what I mean than I can talking. And I only sketched the thing to you before."

Anthony unfolded the sheet, and read:—

Summary of Information Elicited

1. Miss Laura Hoode.—Played cards until 10 o'clock with the deceased, Sir A. D.-C., and Mrs. Mainwaring. Then went to bed. Was seen in bed at approximately 10.30 by Annie Holt, parlour-maid, who was called into room to take some order as she passed on her way to the servants' quarters. Miss Hoode remembered, at about 11.05, urgent telephone call to be made. Got up, went downstairs to phone, then thought she would consult deceased first. Entered study, at 11.10, and discovered body. [*Note.*—By no means a complete alibi; but it seems quite out of the question that this lady is in any way concerned.

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A. D.-C.) to read at approximately 10.10. Was seen entering by Mabel Smith, who was working in linen-room immediately opposite. She had had afternoon off and was consequently very busy. Stayed there till immediately (say two minutes) before murder was discovered. She can swear Mr. Deacon never left room the whole time, having had to leave door of linen-room open owing to heat.

6. WOMEN SERVANTS.—These are Elsie Syme, Mabel Smith, Martha Forrest, Annie Holt, Lily Ingram. All except the first two account for each other over the vital times, having been in the servants' quarters (in which the rooms are inter-communicating) from 10.15 or so onwards. Elsie Syme, who was downstairs in the servants' hall until the murder was discovered, and Mabel Smith, may be disregarded. They have no one to substantiate their statements, but there is no doubt at all that they are ordinary, foolish, honest working-girls. (See also note after details re Miss Hoode.)

7. ALFRED POOLE (Butler).—Has not a shred of alibi. Was seated, as usual, in his den opposite study all the evening. After 10 spoke to no one; was seen by nobody. May, however, be disregarded as in any way connected with murder. Will be very useful witness. May (in my opinion) be trusted implicitly. Not very intelligent. Very old, infirm, but sufficiently capable to answer questions truthfully and clearly. [Has, for one point, nothing like half strength murderer

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