

Scene III

*(The same. The following Saturday morning.)*

*(As the curtain goes up, INSPECTOR CRADDOCK is lying in the same position as the body in the previous scene. SERGEANT MELLORS is standing below the sideboard looking at CRADDOCK. CRADDOCK, a man of about fifty, rises and looks at the bullet holes in the wall by the sideboard.)*

CRADDOCK. So. He fires two shots from here – hits the wall – and then shoots himself?

MELLORS. If he tripped, he could have done it accidentally, sir.

CRADDOCK. Are they all here, now?

MELLORS. Yes, sir. Grumbling and moaning...

CRADDOCK. *(with apparent uninterest)* Oh...

MELLORS. And I should watch that Edmund Swettenham.

CRADDOCK. Why?

MELLORS. I should think he's a bit of a left-wing intellectual.

CRADDOCK. I didn't get that impression last night.

MELLORS. He's been a bit bolshy with me, sir. He was having a go at the Force this morning. Sprouting on about our Gestapo methods.

CRADDOCK. Oh – Christ! Why do I always pick the awkward ones?

MELLORS. You do seem to attract them, sir.

CRADDOCK. Why can't I get a nice, peaceful, law-abiding lot who do as they're told and answer my questions with a certain amount of civility.

MELLORS. Not your style, sir.

CRADDOCK. Once! Just once! That's all I ask. *(He looks up, pointing.)* Somebody up there doesn't like me, Sergeant. And, what's more – *(indicating off)* – that lot out there are trying to compound the felony.

MELLORS. *(after a moment)* Shall I wheel them in?

CRADDOCK. There's nothing else for it, is there?

MELLORS. 'Fraid not, sir.

*(MELLORS goes to the Locked Door and tries to open it.)*

CRADDOCK. Not that door, it's been sealed for years.

*(MELLORS goes out through the Main Door and across to the dining-room, asking the people to come through into the drawing-room. They do so, everyone who was in the room at the close of the previous scene, chattering amongst themselves as they enter)*

*(In a normal voice.)* Can I have your attention, please?

*(They take no notice.)*

Quiet, please.

*(They still take no notice.)*

*(Shouting.)* Perlease!

*(They are all a little taken aback. The chatter dies instantly.)*

That's very good of you. I do appreciate your co-operation.

MRS. SWETTENHAM. This is very inconvenient, Inspector. It is Saturday. There's shopping, and lots of jobs to be done.

CRADDOCK. I understand your problem, Mrs. Swettenham. But, may I remind you, a man died here last night – right on the spot where you're standing –

*(A little horrified at the thought, MRS. SWETTENHAM shifts her position.)*

– and whilst it may not seem overly important to you – it is to me and society in general. So, if it's not asking too much I'd like you to push your shopping to the back of your mind for a while and answer a few questions.