

MISS BLACKLOCK. Mitzi...

(MITZI does not answer. She exits without a backward glance, slamming the door behind her.)

(MISS BLACKLOCK turns to CRADDOCK.)

(appealing) She can't go...

CRADDOCK. Certainly not.

MISS BLACKLOCK. I'll go after her.

CRADDOCK. Of course. And when you catch up with her, you might tell her that she won't get any further than the bus station.

(MISS BLACKLOCK makes a hurried exit.)

(CRADDOCK sits down and starts to read the letters.)

(After a moment the Main Door opens and MISS MARPLE enters.)

MISS MARPLE. Inspector!

CRADDOCK. *(covering the letters)* Ah, my little sleuth. You're just in time.

MISS MARPLE. Some people say I'm like a bad penny.

CRADDOCK. But, not me, Miss Marple – not me.

MISS MARPLE. I passed Miss Blacklock – she told me to come in. That girl of hers, Mitzi, was haring down the drive like a maniac.

CRADDOCK. She is rather peculiar, isn't she? Well. Now you're here you can make yourself useful and help me with a little research. *(He holds up a letter.)*

MISS MARPLE. Certainly, but I do have to talk to Miss Blacklock...

CRADDOCK. It won't take long – and I don't think you'd want to pass up the opportunity of going through someone's old letters!

MISS MARPLE. *(with a broad smile)* Inspector! That's not like me – whose are they!

(CRADDOCK holds the letters out to her. She takes them.)

CRADDOCK. It's from Miss Blacklock to her sister, Charlotte. If you find anything that might be helpful – *as well as interesting* – read it out to me, please.

MISS MARPLE. Very well.

(They sit down opposite each other and start reading.)

CRADDOCK. Here's something that's been mentioned before.

MISS MARPLE. Oh?

CRADDOCK. It refers to her disfigurement – Charlotte's that is. *(Reading.)* "It's not as bad as you think it is and you shouldn't lock yourself away..."

MISS MARPLE. I wonder what it was – this disfigurement?

CRADDOCK. It doesn't say specifically – I don't suppose it was anything much...

MISS MARPLE. Then why should she lock herself away?

CRADDOCK. In my experience, most women are extremely vain. How would you react if you had a mole on the end of your nose?

MISS MARPLE. I wouldn't have to look at it.

CRADDOCK. But, most women would hide themselves behind a veil.

(They go back to their respective letters.)

MISS MARPLE. It's mentioned in this one, too. Listen. *(Reading.)* "I do wish you'd get out more. No one else notices it."

CRADDOCK. You see. Pure vanity!

MISS MARPLE. *(Thoughtfully.)* Maybe.

CRADDOCK. *(still looking at his letter)* Ah. This is what I've been looking for.

MISS MARPLE. What is it?

CRADDOCK. About Sonia Goedler – the fights she had with her brother. (*Reading.*) “Sonia has such a violent temper. It’s quite terrifying sometimes.”

MISS MARPLE. Did you ever find any photographs of Sonia?

CRADDOCK. They’ve disappeared – rather conveniently. But, violent temper, and Miss Blacklock says she was dark and attractive. Makes you think, doesn’t it?

MISS MARPLE. (*thoughtfully*) Yes. It does indeed Inspector. (*She goes back to her letter.*) Here’s something interesting. (*reading*) “You can always tell when Sonia is angry. She has the habit of clenching and unclenching her hands.” Who does that remind you of?

CRADDOCK. You’ve got me there. That’s something I’ve missed.

MISS MARPLE. And, you don’t miss much, do you? Julia Simmons does it when she’s – agitated. I’ve been keeping a very careful watch on that young woman.

CRADDOCK. Well, I’ve checked out both Julia and Patrick Simmons. The French police contacted their mother in the South of France and she confirmed that they were staying here.

MISS MARPLE. Really? There’s no mistake?

CRADDOCK. Well, unless the woman in the South of France *isn’t* their mother.

MISS MARPLE. Could she be Sonia? Keeping out of the way until it’s all over.

CRADDOCK. The French police must have checked on her. They’re very thorough.

MISS MARPLE. So, she is Letty Blacklock’s cousin?

CRADDOCK. Almost certainly.

MISS MARPLE. I was hoping we’d found Emma – but, I know there was always a possibility I was wrong suspecting Julia. She isn’t the only one who does that

hand-clenching business. Phillipa Haymes does it as well.

CRADDOCK. That's very observant of you, Miss Marple. Ten out of ten.

MISS MARPLE. It's very frustrating that there isn't a photograph of Sonia.

CRADDOCK. Yes. Sonia Goedler seems to have disappeared off the face of the earth.

MISS MARPLE. I wonder what this means? *(Reading.)* "Lots of love, darling, and buck up. This iodine treatment may make a lot of difference."

CRADDOCK. *(thoughtfully)* It must have been some special kind of treatment they used in those days.

MISS MARPLE. For what?

CRADDOCK. TB. That is why Miss Blacklock sent her sister to Switzerland.

(MISS MARPLE muses. CRADDOCK moves to the album on the table and starts to flip through. Then he taps the album with his finger.)

Who does that remind you of?

MISS MARPLE. I must admit, it does look like Clara Swettenham but...

CRADDOCK. But what?

MISS MARPLE. Well, it is an old photograph, Inspector.

(The main door opens and MISS BLACKLOCK enters.)

MISS BLACKLOCK. I'm sorry to keep you waiting, Miss Marple. You wanted to see me?

MISS MARPLE. Yes, please. About the funeral service.

CRADDOCK. Well, I must get back to the station. I'll take these with me if you don't mind, Miss Blacklock. I'll return them later. Good bye, ladies.

(CRADDOCK exits.)