

The Thirty-Nine Steps

三十九级台阶

简介

理查德·哈内走回他伦敦的公寓，感到百无聊赖。他想，在英格兰好像什么令人激动的事情也不曾发生过。也许他该回非洲去。然而，那天晚上来了一位叫斯卡德尔的客人，给他讲了一个离奇的故事。

一周以后，哈内卧在苏格兰荒原的石楠丛中，饥肠辘辘，筋疲力尽。一架小飞机在他头顶的蓝天上低空盘旋。哈内一动不动地躺着，希望谢天谢地飞机不要发现他，同时琢磨着口袋里斯卡德尔的黑色小笔记本。斯卡德尔在笔记本里记着“黑石”，这个神秘的黑石是谁呢？那个“三十九级台阶”又怎么那么重要？六月十五日伦敦会出什么事？

而斯卡德尔已经被害，哈内的敌人在苏格兰的山山岭岭日夜追捕他，他必须自己搞清这是为什么。如果他的敌人抓住他，就会把他杀掉……

约翰·巴肯（1875—1940）：苏格兰作家，政治家，曾任加拿大总督。他有许多著作最有名的是理查德·哈内系列惊险小说，其中包括《三十九级台阶》，该书写于一九一五年，后改编成著名导演希区科克执导的电影。

1 The man who died

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I returned to my flat at about three o'clock on that Mayafternoon very unhappy with life. I has been back in Britain for three monthsand I was already bored. The weather was bad, thepeople were dull, and the amusements ofLondon seemed as exciting as a glass of cold water.'Richard Hannay, 'Itold myself, 'you have made a mistake, andyou had better do something about it.'

It made me angry when I thought of the years I had spent inAfrica. I had spent those years working very hard and making money. Not a lotof money, but enough for me. I had leftScotland when I was six years old, and lhad never been home since. For years I had dreamt of coming home to Britainand spending the rest of my life there, butI was disappointed with the place after the first week. And so here I was, thirty-sevencyears old, healthy, withenough money to have a good time, andbored to death.

That evening I went out to dinner and sat reading thenewspapers afterwards. They were full of the troubles in south-east Europe, andthere was a long report about Karolides, theGreek Prime Minister. He seemed to be an honest man, butsome people in Europe hated him. However, manypeople in Britain liked him, and onenewspaper said that he was the only man who could prevent a war starting. Iremember wondering if

I could get a job in south-east Europe; it might be a lot less boring than life in London.

As I walked home that night, I decided to give Britain one more day. If nothing interesting happened, I would take the next boat back to Africa.

My flat was in a big new building in Langham Place. There was a doorman at the entrance to the building, but each flat was separate, with its own front door. I was just putting the key into my door when a man appeared next to me. He was thin, with a short brown beard and small, very bright eyes. I recognized him as the man who lived in a flat on the top floor of the building. We had spoken once or twice on the stairs.

'Can I speak to you?' he asked. 'May I come in for a minute?' His voice was shaking a little.

I opened the door and we went in.

'Is the door locked?' he asked, and quickly locked it himself.

'I'm very sorry,' he said to me. 'It's very rude of me. But I'm in a dangerous corner and you looked like the kind of man who would understand. If I explain, will you help me?'

'I'll listen to you,' I said. 'That's all I promise. I was getting worried by this strange man's behaviour.'

There was a table with drinks on it next to him, and he took a large whisky for himself. He drank it quickly, and then put the glass down so violently that it broke.

'I'm sorry,' he said. 'I'm a little nervous tonight. You see, at this moment I'm dead.'

I sat down in an armchair and lit my pipe.

'How does it feel?' I asked. I was now almost sure that the man was mad.

He smiled. 'I'm not mad yet. Listen, I've been watching you, and I guess that you're not easily frightened. I'm going to tell you my story. I need help very badly, and I want to know if you're the right man to ask.'

'Tell me your story,' I said, 'and I'll tell you if I can help you.'

It was an extraordinary story. I didn't understand all of it, and I had to ask a lot of questions, but here it is:

His name was Franklin P. Scudder and he was an American, but he had been in south-east Europe for several years. By accident, he had discovered a group of people who were working secretly to push Europe towards a war. These people were clever, and dangerous. Some of them wanted to change the world through war; others simply wanted to make a lot of money, and there is always money to be made

from a war. Their plan was to get Russia and Germany at war with each other.

'I want to stop them,' Scudder told me, 'and if I can stay alive for another month, I think I can.'

'I thought you were already dead,' I said.

'I'll tell you about that in a minute,' he answered. 'But first, do you know who Constantine Karolides is?'

'The Greek Prime Minister. I've just been reading about him in today's newspapers.'

'Right. He's the only man who can stop the war. He's intelligent, he's honest, and he knows what's going on-and so his enemies plan to kill him. I have discovered how. That was very dangerous for me, so I had to disappear. They can't kill Karolides in Greece because he has too many guards. But on the 15th of June he's coming to London for a big meeting, and his enemies plan to kill him here.'

'You can warn him,' I said. 'He'll stay at home.'

'That's what his enemies want. If he doesn't come, they'll win, because he's the only man who understands the whole problem and who can stop the war happening.'

'Why don't you go to the British police?' I said.

'No good. They could bring in five hundred policemen, but they wouldn't stop the murder. The murderer will be caught, and he'll talk and put the blame on the governments in Vienna and Berlin. It will all be lies, of course, but everybody will be ready to believe it. But none of this will happen if Franklin P. Scudder is here in London on the 15th of June.'

I was beginning to like this strange little man. I gave him another whisky and asked him why he thought that he was now in danger himself.

He took a large mouthful of whisky. 'I came to London by a strange route-through Paris, Hamburg, Norway, and Scotland. I changed my name in every country, and when I got to London, I thought I was safe. But yesterday I realized that they're still following me. There's a man watching this building and last night somebody put a card under my door. On it was the name of the man I fear most in the world.'

'So I decided I had to die. Then they would stop looking for me. I got a dead body-it's easy to get one in London, if you know how-and I had the body brought to my flat in a large suitcase. The body was the right age, but the face was different from mine. I dressed it in my clothes and shot it in the face with my own gun. My servant will find me when he arrives in the morning and he'll call the police. I've left a lot of empty whisky bottles in my room. The police will think I drank too much and then killed myself.' He paused. 'I watched from the window until I saw you come home, and then came down the stairs to meet

you.'

It was the strangest of stories. However, in my experience, the most extraordinary stories are often the true ones. And if the man just wanted to get into my flat and murder me, why didn't he tell a simpler story?

'Right,' I said. 'I'll trust you for tonight. I'll lock you in this room and keep the key. Just one word, Mr Scudder. I believe you're honest, but if you're not, I should warn you that I know how to use a gun.'

'Certainly,' he answered, jumping up. 'I'm afraid I don't know your name, sir, but I would like to thank you. And could I use your bathroom?'

When I next saw him, half an hour later, I didn't recognize him at first. Only the bright eyes were the same. His beard was gone, and his hair was completely different. He walked like a soldier, and he was wearing glasses. And he no longer spoke like an American.

'Mr Scudder—I cried.

'Not Mr Scudder,' he answered. 'Captain Theophilus Digby of the British Army. Please remember that.'

I made him a bed in my study, and then went to bed myself, happier than I had been for the past month. Interesting things did happen sometimes, even in London.

* * *

The next morning when my servant Paddock arrived, I introduced him to Captain Digby. I explained that the Captain was an important man in the army, but he had been working too hard and needed rest and quiet. Then I went out, leaving them both in the flat. When I returned at about lunchtime, the doorman told me that the gentleman in flat 15 had killed himself. I went up to the top floor, had a few words with the police, and was able to report to Scudder that his plan had been successful. The police believed that the dead man was Scudder, and that he had killed himself. Scudder was very pleased.

For the first two days in my flat, he was very calm, and spent all his time reading and smoking, and writing in a little black notebook. But after that he became more restless and nervous. It was not his own danger that he worried about, but the success of his plan to prevent the murder of Karolides. One night he was very serious.

'Listen, Hannay,' he said. 'I think I must tell you some more about this business. I would hate to get killed without leaving someone else to carry on with my plan.'

I didn't listen very carefully. I was interested in Scudder's adventures, but I wasn't very interested in politics. I remember that he said Karolides was only in danger in London. He also mentioned a woman called Julia Czechenyi. He talked about a Black Stone

and a man who lisped when he spoke. And he described another man, perhaps the most dangerous of them all—an old man with a young voice who could hood his eyes like a hawk.

The next evening I had to go out. I was meeting a man I had known in Africa for dinner. When I returned to the flat, I was surprised to see that the light in the study was out. I wondered if Scudder had gone to bed early. I turned on the light, but there was nobody there. Then I saw something in the corner that made my blood turn cold.

Scudder was lying on his back. There was a long knife through his heart, pinning him to the floor.

1 死人

五月的那个下午三点来钟我回到寓所，过得很不开心。回到英国三个月，我已经厌烦了。伦敦的气候糟糕，人也没劲，各种娱乐好像没味的白水一杯。我暗暗对自己说：“理查德·哈内，这回你错了，最好想办法改过吧。”

想到在非洲的岁月我就有气。我呆了那么多年，拼命干活挣钱。现在钱虽然不多，但足够我用的。自从六岁我离开苏格兰就再也没回过家。那么多年我一直梦想回英国老家来度我的余生，然而才回来一周，就对这个地方大失所望。眼前的情况是，本人三十七岁，身体健康，有足够的钱享受，但无聊得要死。

那天晚上我出去吃饭，然后坐在那儿读报纸。报纸上报道的都是关于东南欧的动乱，其中有一篇关于希腊首相卡罗里德斯的长篇报道。这个人看来是个实在人，可是欧洲一些人却讨厌他。可是也有些英国人喜欢他，有一家报纸说只有他能防止战争爆发。我记得我当时琢磨能否在东南欧找个工作；那里大概绝不会像伦敦的生活这样无聊。

当晚回家的时候我下定决心在英国再呆一天便走人。如果没有什么叫人感兴趣的事，我就乘下一班船回非洲去。

我的寓所在兰厄姆一幢新大楼里。大楼的入口处有个看门人，但每个寓所各自独立，都有个前门。我刚刚把钥匙插进锁孔，突然见旁边有个人。他身材瘦削，留着褐色的短胡子，眼睛不大却很有光彩。我认出他就住在这幢大楼的顶楼。在楼梯上我们说过一两次话。

“可以和您说句话吗？”他问道。“我可以进去呆一会儿吗？”他的声音有点儿发颤。

我打开门，我们进了屋。

“门锁上了吗？”他问我，随后自己赶快把门锁上。

“很抱歉，”他对我说，“我这样做很失礼，我现在身处险境，您看着是个明白人。如果我讲出来您能帮我吗？”

“我会听您说的，”我答道，“目前就能答应这么多。”这个陌生人的举止让我不安。

在他身旁的桌子上放着饮料，他给自己倒了一大杯威士忌。他一饮而尽，然后把杯

子重重一放，力量太大，以致于杯子打破了。

“对不起，”他说，“今天晚上我有点儿紧张。您看，现在我已死了。”

我在扶手椅上坐下来，点着烟斗。

“死是什么感觉？”我问他。当时我差不多肯定这人是疯子。

他笑了。“我没有疯——还没有。请听我说，我一直在观察您，我猜您不那么容易被吓住。我想给您讲讲我的事。我极需帮助，并且想知道我是否求对了人。”

“那就说说吧，”我说，“然后我才能告诉您我是否能帮您的忙。”

他的故事非同一般，我并不全明白，不得不问好多问题，下面就是他的故事。

他叫富兰克林·P·斯卡德尔，是个美国人，已经在东南欧呆了几年。他偶然发现一伙人正在密谋把欧洲推向战争。这伙人狡猾而险恶。有的想通过战争改变世界，有的想发财打仗总是能发财的。他们计划唆使俄国与德国互相打起来。

“我想制止他们，”斯卡德尔对我说，“如果我能多活一个月，我想我能做到。”

我说：“我原以为您已经死了。”

“过一会儿再谈这件事，”他说，“首先，您知道康斯坦丁·卡罗里德斯是谁吗？”

“是希腊的首相。我刚刚在今天的报纸上读到他的消息。”

“对。他是唯一能制止这场战争的人。他精明诚实，了解现状——所以他的敌人就打算把他干掉。我已经发现他们用什么方法。对我来说这就很危险了，所以我必须躲起来。在希腊他们杀不了卡罗里德斯，因为他有许多卫士。但是他准备在六月十五日来伦敦参加一个大会，他的敌人要在这儿把他干掉。”

我说：“您可以事先告诉他。他就会呆在家里了。”

“他的敌人就要他这样。假如他不来，他们就赢了，因为只有他才了解问题的全部，才能制止战争爆发。”

“那您为什么不去找英国警察？”我问。

“没有用。他们会带来五百名警察，但也不能阻止这次谋杀。动手杀人的会被抓住，他也会招供，但会把责任都推到维也纳和柏林政府的头上。那自然都是谎话，但是人们会马上相信这套。然而，如果富兰克林·P·斯卡德尔六月十五日在伦敦，这种事就绝不会发生。”

我逐渐开始喜欢这个小个子陌生人。我又给他倒了一杯威士忌，问为什么他认为自己处于危险之中。

他喝了一大口威士忌。“我是通过一条人们不熟悉的路线——穿过巴黎、汉堡、挪威

和苏格兰来伦敦的。每到一个国家我就更名改姓，到了伦敦，我觉得安全了。可是昨天我发现他们仍然在跟踪我。有个人监视着这座大楼而且昨天晚上不知道是谁把一张名片塞到门下面。名片上的名字是这个世界上最惧怕的人。

“所以我下决心必须死掉。这样他们就会不再找我。我搞到一具死尸——在伦敦只要你知道门路，搞个死尸并不难——然后我用一个大衣箱把死尸弄到房间。那个死人和我年纪相符，只是面貌和我不同。我给他穿上我的衣裳，拿枪朝他脸上开了几枪。等早晨我的仆人来了会发现我而且会报警。我在房间留下了许多空威士忌酒瓶。警察会以为我饮酒过度，自己送了命。”他停了一下，“我从窗户向外观察，一直看到您回家，然后我才下楼来见您。”

这个故事真是奇中之奇。然而根据我的经历，最奇怪的故事往往是真事。而且，假定这个人进到我房间想害我，为什么他不讲简单一点呢？

“好吧，”我说，“今晚我就相信您这一回好了。我把您锁在这间屋里，我拿着钥匙。斯卡德尔先生，听我说一句话。我相信您是个诚实人，但是如果您不诚实，我可警告您，我也知道枪怎么用。”

“那是自然，”他回答着，激动得跳了起来。“先生，恐怕我还不知道您叫什么，但我要感谢您。我能使用您的浴室吗？”

半个小时以后，我再见到他，乍一看都认不出来了。只有那双炯炯发光的眼睛依然如旧。胡子不见了，头发也与刚才完全不同。走起路来像个军人，戴着一副眼镜。说话也不再像美国人了。

“斯卡德尔先生——”我叫了起来。

“不是斯卡德尔先生，”他回答说，“英国陆军上尉西奥费乐司·迪格比。请记住这个名字。”

我在书房给他铺了一张床，然后就自己回去睡觉，感到一个月来从没这么高兴过。刺激的事有时到底碰得上，甚至在伦敦也一样。

第二天早晨我的仆人帕多克来了，我把迪格比上尉介绍给他。我说上尉在军队是个重要人物，他工作得太辛苦了需要休息和安静。然后我就出门去，把他们俩留在房里。大约午饭时我回来，看门人告诉我住在十五号房的先生自杀了。我上了顶楼，和警察谈了几句，就回来告诉斯卡德尔他的计划成功了。警察相信那个死尸就是斯卡德尔，而且是自杀的。斯卡德尔听了很高兴。

他在我寓所住的前两天神态非常平静，一直在读书，吸烟，在一个黑色的小笔记本上写东西。然而此后他变得坐卧不宁，惴惴不安。他愁的不是自己的危险，而是他制止谋杀卡罗里德斯的计划能否成功。一天晚上他神色非常严肃。

“听我说，哈内，”他对我说，“我觉得这件事我得给您讲点。如果我来不及托付给别人继续执行我的计划就被杀掉，会遗憾无穷的。”

我不甚认真地听着。因为我对斯卡德尔的冒险故事感兴趣，而对政治无所谓。我记得

他说过卡罗里德斯只有在伦敦才有危险。我还记得他提过一个叫朱莉娅·采奇尼的女人。他谈过一个叫黑石的人和一個说话口齿不清的人。他还绘声绘色地说起另外一个人，这个人可能最为险恶——一个说话声音像年轻人，像猫头鹰似地眯着眼睛的老人。

第二天晚上我得出去一下，去见一个在非洲的熟人，并一块吃顿饭。我回到寓所时吃惊地看到书房的灯关掉了。我想斯卡德尔是不是早早睡觉了。打开灯，但一个人也没有。后来看到墙角处有个什么东西，吓得我浑身冰凉。

斯卡德尔仰面朝天躺着。一把长刀贯穿心脏，把他钉在地板上。

2 The milkman starts his travels

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I sat down in an armchair and felt very sick. After about five minutes I started shaking. The poor white face with its staring eyes was too much for me, so I got a tablecloth and covered it. Then I took the whisky bottle and drank several mouthfuls. I had seen men die violently before. I had killed a few myself in the Matabelewar; but this was different. After a few more minutes I managed to calm myself down a little. I looked at my watch and saw that it was half past ten. I searched the flat carefully, but there was nobody there. Then I locked the doors and windows.

By this time I was beginning to think more clearly. It looked bad for me—that was clear. It was now certain that Scudder's story was true—the proof was lying under the tablecloth. His enemies had found him and made sure of his silence. But he had been in my flat for four days, and they must think he had told his story to me. So I would be the next to die. It might be that night, or the next day, or the day after, but it was sure to happen.

Then I thought of another problem. I could call the police now, or go to bed and wait for Paddock to discover the body and call them in the morning. But what would the police think? What story would I tell them about Scudder? I had lied to Paddock about him, and my story would be hard to believe. They would arrest me for murder, and I had no real friends in England to help me. Perhaps that was part of the plan. An English prison would be a safe place for me until the 15th of June.

Even if the police did believe my story, I would still be helping Scudder's enemies. Karolides would stay at home, which was what they wanted. Scudder's death had made me certain that his story was true; now I felt responsible for continuing his work. I hate to see a good man beaten, and if I carried on in Scudder's place, the murderers might not win.

I decided I must disappear, and remain hidden until just before the 15th of June. Then I must contact some government people and tell them Scudder's story. I wished he had told me more, and that I had listened more carefully to what he had told me. There was a risk that the government would not believe me, but it was my best chance. Perhaps

more evidence would appear which would help me to make my story believable.

It was now the 24th of May, so I had twenty days of hiding. Two groups of people would be looking for Scudder's enemies, who would want to kill me, and the police, who would want me for Scudder's murder. There was going to be a chase, and, surprisingly, I was almost happy about this. I did not want to sit in one place and wait. If I could move, the situation did not seem so bad.

I wondered if Scudder had any papers which would give me more information about his business. I lifted off the table-cloth and searched him. There were only a few coins in his trouser pockets. There was no sign of the little black notebook. I supposed his murderer had taken that.

When I turned from the body, I noticed that all the cupboards were open. Scudder had been a very careful man, and always kept the place tidy. Someone had been searching for something, and perhaps for the notebook. I went round the flat and found that everything had been searched—the insides of books, cupboards, boxes, even the pockets of my clothes. There was no sign of the notebook, so Scudder's enemies had probably found it in the end.

Then I got out a map of Britain. My plan was to find some wild country. I was used to Africa, and I would feel trapped in the city. I thought Scotland would probably be best, because my family came from Scotland and I could pretend to be a Scotsman easily. The other possibility was to be a German tourist; my father had worked with Germans and I had spoken German often as a boy. But it would probably be better to be a Scotsman in Scotland. I decided to go to Galloway, which, from the map, seemed to be the nearest wild part of Scotland.

In the railway timetable I found a train from London at seven-ten in the morning, which would get me to Galloway in the late afternoon. The problem was getting to the station, as I was certain that Scudder's enemies were watching the building. I thought about this problem, had a good idea, went to bed, and slept for two hours.

I got up at four o'clock. The first light of a summer morning was in the sky and the birds were starting to sing. I put on some old clothes which I used for country walking and some strong walking boots. I pushed another shirt and a toothbrush into my pockets. I had taken a lot of money out of the bank in case Scudder needed it, so I took that as well. Then I cut my long moustache as short as possible.

Paddock arrived every morning at seven-thirty. But at about twenty to seven I knew the milkman would come; the noise of the milk bottles usually woke me up. He was a young man with a very short moustache, and he wore a white coat. He was my only chance.

I had a breakfast of biscuits and whisky and by the time I had finished it was about six

o'clock. I got my pipe and started to fill it from my tobacco jar. As I put my fingers into the tobacco, I touched something hard, and pulled out Scudder's little black book.

This seemed a good sign. I lifted the cloth and looked at Scudder's peaceful face. 'Goodbye, my friend,' I said; 'I'm going to do my best for you. Wish me good luck.'

Six-thirty passed, then six-forty, but still the milkman did not come. Why, oh why, was this the morning he had to be late?

At fourteen minutes to seven I heard him. I opened the door quickly, and he jumped a bit when he saw me.

'Come in a moment,' I said, and we went back into the hall. 'I can see you're a man who likes a bit of fun. Can you help me? Lend me your hat and coat for a minute and you can have this.'

He looked at the money in my hand and smiled. 'What do you want my clothes for?' he asked.

'It's a game,' I said. 'I haven't time to explain now, but to win I've got to be a milkman for ten minutes. You'll be a bit late, but you'll get the money for your time.'

'All right!' he said. 'I like a game myself. Here you are.'

I put on his blue hat and white coat, picked up the empty milk bottles, shut my door and went downstairs, whistling.

At first I thought the street was empty. Then I saw a man walking slowly towards me. As he passed, he looked up at a window in the house opposite, and I saw a face look back at him.

I crossed the street, still whistling, and then turned down a little side street. As I dropped the hat, coat and milk bottles behind a wall, I heard a church clock; it was seven o'clock.

I ran to the station as fast as I could. It was just ten past seven when I reached the platform. I had no time to buy a ticket; the train was already moving. I jumped into the last carriage.

2 送奶员开始旅行

我坐在扶手椅上，感到很恶心。五分钟后开始颤栗。我受不了那张可怜的、惨白的脸和直瞪瞪的眼睛，因此，拿了一块桌布把它盖起来。然后抄起威士忌酒瓶喝了几口。以前我见过暴死的，在麦特比尔战争中也亲手杀过几个人；但这回却有所不同。又过了几分钟我才使自己稍微平静一点。看了看表，是十点半。我仔细地把寓所搜查了一遍，没发现什么人。然后就把门窗都锁起来。

直到此刻我才开始比较冷静地思考。情况对我不利——这很显然。斯卡德尔所言肯定

不虚——证据就在桌布下面躺着。他的敌人找到了他，使他彻底沉默了。然而他在我寓所呆了四天，他们肯定认为他把事情告诉了我。所以下一个大概就轮到我死了。可能在今天晚上，可能在明天，也可能在后天，但我是死定了。

接着我考虑了另一个问题。我可以现在就报警，或者上床睡觉，等帕多克早晨来发现了尸体再报警。可是警察会怎么想呢？我该如何向警察讲斯卡德尔的事呢？关于斯卡德尔的事我已经对帕多克撒了谎，因此我的话很难令人相信。他们会以谋杀的罪名逮捕我，在英格兰我又没有好朋友帮忙。也许这正是他们计划的一部分。在英国监狱呆到六月十五日对我来说倒是最安全。

即使警察相信我的话，我仍然是帮了斯卡德尔敌人的忙。卡罗里德斯就会留在国内，这正中他们的下怀。斯卡德尔的死使我确信他的话不假；我觉得现在有责任把他的事做下去。看到好人被打败我心有不甘，而如果我代替斯卡德尔干下去，那些凶手也许就不能得手。

我决定必须躲起来，一直藏到六月十五日前。然后我得找政府的人，把斯卡德尔的事告诉他们。我真希望当初他多说点，或者我对他的话听仔细点。如果政府的人不相信我就要冒险了，但我只有这个最佳机会。也许将来证据会多一些，使我的话叫人相信。

现在是五月二十四日，所以我要躲二十天。有两拨人要找我——一拨是斯卡德尔的敌人，他们找我想要杀我；另一拨是警察，他们找我是为斯卡德尔的谋杀案。追踪马上就要开始，不知怎么的，我反倒为此有点乐滋滋的。我不想坐等别人来抓。如果我有所行动，情况未必那么糟糕。

我想斯卡德尔有没有留下什么文件，使我能多了解一些他干的事。我揭开桌布把他搜查了一遍。他裤兜里只有几个硬币。那个小黑笔记本不见了。我猜是那些凶手拿走了。

我扭过头去，发现所有的橱柜都打开了。斯卡德尔向来十分细心，总是把屋子保持得很整洁。肯定有人找过什么东西，多半是找那个小黑笔记本。我在各屋转了一圈，发现什么都被搜查了一遍——书本、橱柜、盒子、甚至我的衣服口袋。仍然不见那个小黑笔记本可见斯卡德尔的敌人最后很可能找到了它。

然后我拿出英国地图。我打算找一个人烟稀少的地方。我已经习惯了非洲的生活，在城市会觉得不自由。我想苏格兰也许最理想，因为我老家是苏格兰，我可以不费吹灰之力地冒充苏格兰人。另外一种可能是扮成德国旅游者；我父亲曾和德国人共过事，我还是个孩子的时候就经常讲德语。但在苏格兰装苏格兰人很可能要好一点。我决定去加洛韦从地图上看那里是最近的苏格兰荒原。

火车时刻表上，有一辆从伦敦来的火车早晨七点十分到站，坐上火车傍晚就可以到加洛韦。问题是如何到车站去，因为我肯定斯卡德尔的敌人在监视这座大楼。我把这件事斟酌了一番，想出个好办法，于是上床睡了两个小时。

我四点钟起床。夏日凌晨的第一缕晨光在天空闪烁，鸟儿也开始鸣啭。我穿上乡间散步时穿的旧衣服而且带着几双走路穿的结实靴子。在口袋里又塞进一件衬衣和一柄牙刷。当初，我从银行取出一大笔钱，以备斯卡德尔不时之需，也一块儿带上。然后我把自己的长胡子尽可能剪短。

帕多克每天早晨七点半到。我知道大约六点四十送奶员就会来；奶瓶的碰撞声常常把我吵醒。他是个年轻人，留着小胡子，穿一件白外套。他是我逃脱的唯一机会。

早饭我吃了点饼干，喝了点威士忌，吃完饭大约六点钟。我掏出烟斗，从烟罐里取出烟装满烟斗。我的手指刚摸到烟，感觉碰到什么硬东西，一拉拉出斯卡德尔的小黑笔记本。

看来这是个好征兆。我把桌布掀开，望着斯卡德尔安详的脸。“朋友，再见了，”我说，“为你的事我会尽最大努力。祝我好运吧。”

六点半过去了，六点四十又过去了，可是送奶员还没来。这是怎么回事，为什么他非得今天早晨迟到不可？

到六点四十六分他来了。我急忙把门打开，他看到我吓了一跳。

“请进来一下，”我说，我们回到大厅。“我看得出来您是个喜欢开点玩笑的人。您能帮我个忙吗？请把您的帽子和外衣借我一下，您可以穿我的。”

他看着我手里的钱，笑了。“您借我的衣服干什么？”他问道。

“玩个游戏，”我回答，“现在没时间解释，要赢我就非扮十分钟的送奶员不可。您会误点时间，这点钱给您作补偿吧。”

“好吧，”他说，“我自己也喜欢玩游戏。给您衣服。”

我戴上他的蓝帽子，穿上他的白外衣，提起空奶瓶，关上门，吹着口哨走下楼去。

我原以为街上空无一人。后来看到有个人慢慢向我走来。他过去时，抬头望着对面房子的窗户，我看到窗口有一张脸也望着他。

我仍然吹着口哨穿过那条街，然后拐进一条小道。把帽子，外衣和牛奶瓶扔在墙后，这时我听到教堂的钟声；正好七点。

我尽快奔到车站。赶到站台，恰好七点十分。火车已经开动；没有时间买票了。我一蹦跳上最后一节车厢。

3 The hotel

3 The hotel-owner

It was fine May weather as I travelled north that day, and as I watched the fields and the trees and the flowers, I wondered why, when I had been a free man, I had stayed in London. I bought some sandwiches at lunch time. I also bought the morning newspaper and read a little about south-east Europe.

When I had finished, I got out Scudder's black book and studied it. It was almost full of writing, mostly numbers, although sometimes there was a name. For example, I found the words 'Hofgaard', 'Luneville', and 'Avocado' quite often. The word I saw the

most was 'Pavia'.

I was certain that Scudder was using a code. I have always been interested in codes; I enjoy games and numbers and things like that. It seemed to be a number code, where groups of numbers replace letters. I worked on the words, because you can use a word as a key in a number code.

I tried for hours, but none of the words helped. Then I fell asleep, and woke up at Dumfries just in time to take the local train into Galloway. There was a man on the platform who worried me a little; he was watching the crowd more closely than I liked. But he didn't look at me, and when I saw myself in a mirror, I understood why; with my brown face and my old clothes I looked just like all the other hill farmers who were getting into the local train.

I travelled with a group of these farmers. The train travelled slowly through narrow valleys and then up onto an open moor. There were lakes, and in the distance I could see high mountains.

At five o'clock the carriage was empty and I was alone. I got out at the next station, a tiny place in the middle of the moor. An old man was digging in the station garden. He stopped, walked to the train, collected a packet, and went back to his potatoes. A ten-year-old child took my ticket, and I came out of the station onto a white road across the moor.

It was a beautiful, clear spring evening. I felt like a boy on a walking holiday, instead of a man of thirty-seven very much wanted by the police. I walked along the road whistling, feeling happier every minute.

After some time I left the road and followed a path along a little stream. I was getting tired when I came to a small house. The woman who lived there was friendly, and said I could sleep there. She also gave me an excellent meal.

Her husband came home from the hills later in the evening. We talked about cows and sheep and markets, and I tried to remember some of the information I heard, because it might be useful. By ten o'clock I was asleep, and I slept until five o'clock in the morning.

The couple refused any money, and by six o'clock I had eaten breakfast and was moving again. I wanted to get back to the railway at a different station. Then I would go back to the east, towards Dumfries. I hoped that if the police were following me, they would think that I had gone on to the coast in the west, where I could escape by ship.

I walked in the same beautiful spring weather as before, and still couldn't make myself feel nervous or worried. After a time I came to the railway line, and soon a little station, which was perfect for my plan. There was just a single line and moors all around.

I waited until I saw a train in the distance, and then bought a ticket to Dumfries.

The only person in the carriage was an old farmer with his sheepdog. He was asleep, and next to him was a newspaper. I picked it up to see if there was any news about me. There was only a short piece about the Langham Place Murder. My servant Paddock had called the police, and the milkman had been arrested. The poor man had spent most of the day with the police, but they had let him go in the evening. The police believed that the real murderer had escaped from London on a train to the north.

When I had finished reading, I looked out of the window and noticed that we were stopping at the station where I had got out yesterday. Three men were talking to the man who I had seen digging potatoes. I sat well back from the window and watched carefully. One of the men was taking notes, and I supposed they were from the local police. Then, I saw the child who had taken my ticket talking, and the men looked out across the moor along that road I had taken.

As we left the station, the farmer woke up, looked at me, and asked where he was. He had clearly drunk too much.

'I'm like this because I never drink,' he said, sadly. 'I haven't touched whisky since last year. Not even at Christmas. And now I've got this terrible headache.'

'What did it?' I asked.

'A drink they call brandy. I didn't touch the whisky because I don't drink, but I kept drinking this brandy. I'll be ill for a fortnight.' His voice got slower and slower and soon he fell asleep again.

I had planned to leave the train at a station, but it now stopped by a river and I decided this would be better. I looked out of the carriage window and saw nobody, so I opened the door and dropped quickly down into the long grass. My plan was going perfectly until the dog decided that I was stealing something and began to bark loudly. This woke up the farmer who started to shout. He thought I was trying to kill myself. I crawled through the long grass for about a hundred metres and then looked back. The train driver and several passengers were all staring in my direction.

Luckily, the dog was now so excited that he pulled the farmer out of the carriage. The farmer began to slide down towards the river. The other passengers ran to help him, the dog bit somebody, and there was a lot of excited shouting. Soon they had forgotten me, and the next time I looked back, the train was moving again.

I was now in the middle of the empty moor, and for the first time I felt really frightened, not of the police but of the people who knew that I knew Scudder's secret. If they caught me, I would be a dead man.

I reached the top of a low hill and looked around. To the south, a long way

away, I saw something which made me tremble...

Low in the sky a small plane was flying slowly across the moor. I was certain that it was looking for me, and I was also certain that it was not the police. I hid low in the heather and watched it for an hour or two as it flew in circles. Finally it disappeared to the south.

I did not like this spying from the air, and I began to think that an open moor was perhaps not the best place to hide. I could see distant forests in the east, and decided that would be better country.

It was about six o'clock in the evening when I left the moor and entered the trees. I came to a bridge by a house, and there, on the bridge, was a young man. He was sitting smoking a pipe, dreamily watching the water, and holding a book. He jumped up as he heard my feet on the road and I saw a friendly young face.

'Good evening to you,' he said in a serious voice. 'It's a fine night to be on the road.'

The smell of cooking came from the house.

'Is that house a hotel?' I asked.

'It certainly is. I'm the owner, and I hope you'll stay the night, because I've been alone for a week.'

I sat down next to him and got out my pipe. I began to think this young man might help me.

'You're young to own a hotel,' I said.

'My father died a year ago and now it's mine. It's not an exciting job for a young man like me. I didn't choose to do it. I want to write books.'

'You've got the right job,' I said. 'With all the travellers you meet you could be the best storyteller in the world.'

'Not today,' he said. 'Two hundred years ago, there were exciting people on the road, but today there are only cars full of fat old women, and fishermen. You can't make stories out of them. I want to sail up an African river, or live in an Indian village and write about things like that.'

The hotel looked peaceful in the evening sun.

'I've travelled a bit,' I said, 'and I'd be happy to live in a peaceful place like this. And perhaps you're sitting next to adventure now. I'll tell you a true story, and you can make a book of it if you like.'

I told him I was in the gold business in Africa, and I had discovered a group of

international thieves. They had chased me to England and had killed my best friend. I described a chase across the desert, and an attack on the ship from Africa. And I described the Langham Place murder in detail. 'You want adventure,' I said, 'well, here it is. The thieves are chasing me now, and the police are chasing them.'

'It's wonderful!' he whispered.

'You believe me,' I said gratefully.

'Of course I do,' he said. 'I can believe anything strange. It's things that happen every day that are difficult to believe.'

He was very young, but he was the man I needed.

'I think my enemies have lost me for the moment. But I must hide and rest for a day or two. Will you help me?'

He jumped up and led me to the house. 'You'll be safe here. I can keep a secret. And you'll tell me some more about your adventures, won't you?'

As I entered the hotel, I heard the sound of an engine. In the sky to the west was my enemy the plane.

He gave me a room at the back of the house. I asked him to watch out for cars and planes and sat down to work on Scudder's little book. As I have said, it was a number code. I had to find the word that was the key to it, and when I thought of the million words it might be, I felt hopeless. But the next afternoon I remembered that Scudder had said a woman called Julia Czechenyi was the key to the Karolides business, so I tried her name as the code key.

It was the answer. In half an hour I was reading, with a white face.

Suddenly, I heard the sound of a car stopping outside the hotel.

Ten minutes later, my young friend came up to my room, his eyes bright with excitement.

'There are two men looking for you,' he whispered. 'They're downstairs now having a drink. They described you very well. I told them you had stayed here last night and had left this morning.'

I asked him to describe them. One was a thin man with dark eyes, the other was always smiling and lisped. They were both English; my young friend was certain of this.

I took a piece of paper and wrote these words in German. I made it look like one page of a private letter:

...Black Stone. Scudder had discovered this, but he could do nothing for a fortnight. I don't think it's any good now because Karolides is uncertain about his plans. But if Mr T. advises, I will do the best I...

'Give this to them and say you found it in my bedroom. Ask them to return it to me if they find me.'

Three minutes later the car began to move. From behind the curtain I saw two men in it, one thin, one fatter.

The young man came back. He was very excited. 'That paper woke them up,' he said, happily. 'The thin man went white, and the fat one whistled. Then they left as quickly as they could.'

'Now I'll tell you what I want you to do,' I said. 'Go to the police station and describe the two men to them. Say you think they may have something to do with the London murder. I'm sure those two men will be back here tomorrow morning for more information about me. Tell the police to be here early.'

At about eight o'clock the next morning I watched three policemen arrive. They hid their car and came into the hotel. Twenty minutes later another car came towards the hotel, but stopped in some trees about two hundred metres away. The two men inside walked up to the hotel.

I had planned to hide in my bedroom and see what happened. But now I had a better idea. I wrote a note to thank the young man for his help, opened my window and dropped out. Watching the hotel carefully, I walked back towards the car in the trees, jumped in, and drove away.

3 旅馆老板

那天我向北走，五月的天气风和日丽。我一边望着田野，树木和花草一边琢磨，我本来是自由之身，呆在伦敦干什么。午饭的时候我买了点三明治，又买了份晨报，读了些有关东南欧的事。

完事之后，我拿出斯卡德尔的黑笔记本仔细研究。笔记本差不多写满了，大多是数字，时而有人名。比如，笔记本上常常可以看到“霍夫高”、“吕内维尔”和“阿沃卡多”。见得最多的词是“帕维亚”。

可以肯定，斯卡德尔用的是密码。对于密码我一直觉得很有兴趣；我喜欢游戏，数字这类的东西。看起来用的是数字密码，用一组组数字代表字母。我研究本上的文字，因为你可以利用文字作为解开数字密码的钥匙。

我试了几个小时。没有一个字有用。后来就睡着了，到邓弗里斯醒来刚好赶上去加洛韦的当地火车。站台有个人让我有点儿担心；他紧盯着过往人群，叫人讨厌。他并没有看我，我自己照照镜子，明白了为什么；我一张古铜色的脸，穿着一身旧衣服，看起来和

正上火车的其他山民一模一样。

我和山民们一起坐着火车。火车缓慢地在狭窄的山谷中穿行，然后爬上开阔的原野。原野上有一个个湖泊，远处能看到一座座高山。

五点钟，车厢空空只剩下我一人。下一站我也下了车，那是个位于荒原中部的小地方。有个老头在车站的园子里挖地。车到了，他停下手里的活，向火车走来，收了个包裹又回到马铃薯地里去。一个十岁的孩子收了车票，我就出了车站，走上横跨荒原的白色大路。

春日的黄昏美丽而清爽。我感到像个野足度假的少年，而不是被警察穷追不舍的、三十七岁的汉子。我一路吹着口哨走下去，越来越觉得美滋滋的。

又过了一会儿，我拐下大路沿着溪边的小路走。我感到累时，忽然看到一间小屋。小屋的女主人对我很好，她说我可以睡在那儿。她还让我美餐了一顿。

黄昏之后，她丈夫从山里回来了。我们一起聊天，谈牛羊，谈市场，我极力记住听来的情况，因为将来可能用得着。十点钟，我睡着了，早上五点醒来。

这对夫妇不肯收我的钱，我六点钟吃完早饭就又上路了。我想在别的车站再上火车。然后登车东行奔邓弗里斯。我想如果警察尾追着我，他们会认为我逃向西边的海岸，在那儿我可以坐船逃跑。

走在路上，春日的天气依然美好如初，我仍然不知道什么是紧张和忧虑。过了一会儿，见到铁路，后来见到车站，这个车站对实现我的计划非常理想。只有单轨铁路，周围都是荒原。我等着火车从远处开来，然后买了一张去邓弗里斯的票。

车厢里只有一个人，是个老农，带着一只牧羊犬。他正在睡觉，旁边放着一张报纸。我拿起报纸，看看有没有关于我的报道。只有一则关于兰厄姆命案的短讯。我的仆人帕多克报了警，于是那个送奶员就被捕了。那个可怜虫被警察关了大半天，到晚上才让他回家。警察认为真正的凶手已逃离伦敦，坐火车北去了。

读完报，向车窗外望去，发现我们就停在昨天我下车的车站。有三个人正在和昨天挖马铃薯的那个人说话。我尽量坐得离车窗远点，仔细观察着。其中一个做着笔记，我猜他们是地方警察。后来我见收票的小孩说话，那几个人顺着我昨天走的路放眼向荒原望着。我们的车离开车站时，那个老农醒了，看了看我，问这是哪里。显然，他喝多了。

“我不常喝酒，所以像这个样子，”他说得很伤心。“打去年我一滴威士忌也没沾过。连过圣诞也没有沾。可现在我喝得头痛得要死。”

“怎么搞的？”我问。

“是那种叫白兰地的酒。由于不喝酒我不沾威士忌，而我老是喝这种白兰地。我可能会病两星期……”他说得越来越慢，很快就又睡着了。

我原来打算在某个车站下车，而现在车停在河边，我想这更好。从车窗向外望去，什么人也没有，我于是迅速地打开车门，飞快地跳进高高的草丛中。老农那条狗却断定

我在偷什么东西，于是狂吠起来，这下把我好好的计划打乱了。老农醒了，也开始叫喊。他认为我想自杀。我在高草丛里爬了大概有一百米然后回头看了看。火车司机还有许多乘客都盯着我这个方向。

万幸的是那条狗激动得一下把老农甩到车厢外边。老农顺着河坡滚下去。其他旅客跑过去帮忙，狗又咬了谁，乱糟糟吵作一团。不久就把我给忘了，再回头一看，火车又开了。

现在我身处荒原中央，头一回感到害怕，不是怕警察，而是怕那些知道我了解斯卡德尔秘密的人。万一他们抓住我，我就完了。

我爬到一座小丘的顶上，四下望着。向南远远望去，我看到一样东西，吓得我浑身发抖……

在天空有一架小飞机低飞着，缓缓穿过荒原。肯定这是在找我，也肯定不是警察。我贴身藏在石楠丛中，望着飞机绕圈子，一直望了一两个小时。最后飞机消失在南方。

我讨厌这种空中间谍行径，同时想到开阔的荒原大概并非理想的藏身之处。东边我可以看到远处的树林，觉得那是个好地方。

大约黄昏六点钟，我离开荒原，钻入树林。我走到一座桥上，桥旁有一座房子，桥上有一个年轻人。他坐在那儿，叼着烟斗迷迷糊糊地望着河水，手里拿着一本书。听到我的脚步声，他跳了起来，我看到他那张和善的面孔。

“晚上好，”他一本正经地说，“这样的晚上走路可真不错。”

房子里飘出做饭的香味。

“这是旅店吗？”我问道。

“当然，我就是老板。希望您留下过夜，我独自一人已经一周了。”

我靠着坐下，掏出烟斗来。开始想这个年轻人也许能帮我的忙。

“您这么年轻就开旅店了。”我说。

“我父亲一年前去世了，把旅馆传给了我。这种事对我这样的年轻人不来劲。这不是我要干的，我想写书。”

“那您这工作正好，”我说。“您接待这么多客人，肯定能成为世界上最棒的小说家。”

“现在不行了，”他说。“二百年前路上过往的人多带劲，可现在满车都是胖女人和渔夫。您没法拿他们编故事。我想在非洲一条河里扬帆而上，或者在印度的农村住下一写些像这样的事情。”

这家旅店在夕阳下宁静祥和。

“我出过几次门，”我说，“要是能住在这样宁静的地方就够开心了。而且现在惊

险的事就在您身边。让我给您讲个真事，如果您愿意，可以拿它写本书。”

我告诉他我在非洲做黄金生意，而且发现了一个国际盗窃集团。他们追我追到英格兰，而且把我的好朋友给杀了。我给他绘声绘色地讲大漠追踪、非洲船上的袭击。我又详细地讲了兰厄姆的谋杀。“您要听惊险的事，”我说，“这里就有。这帮窃贼正在追杀我而警察也正在追捕他们。”

“太好了！”他低声说。

“您信得过我，”我心怀感激地说。

“当然信得过，”他说。“什么怪事我都信。天天见到的事倒是让人难以相信的。”

他还年轻，但我正需要这样的人。

“我想我的仇人这会儿不知道我哪儿去了。但我必须躲起来而且休息一两天。您能帮忙吗？”

他跳起来，把我领进屋去。“这儿很安全。我可以保密。您多说说您的冒险故事，好不好？”

一进旅店我就听到发动机的声音。敌人的飞机就在西边的天上。

他把我安置在后面的一间屋里。我求他注意观察汽车和飞机，然后就坐下来研究斯卡德尔的小笔记本。以前说过，这是数字暗码。我必须找到解码的关键字，而当我想到有几百万个字的可能性时，感到束手无策。但是第二天下午，我想起斯卡德尔说过一个叫朱莉娅·采奇尼的女人是卡罗里德斯事件的关键，因此，我试着用她的名字作解码的钥匙。

答案有了。我读了半个小时，惊得脸色煞白。

突然，我听到旅店门外汽车的刹车声。

十分钟后，年轻的朋友到我屋来，兴奋得两眼发光。

“有两个人正在找您，”他小声说。“现在在楼下喝水。他们把您的相貌说得一点儿不差。我告诉他们您昨天晚上在这儿过夜了，今天早晨走的。”

我问他们什么长相。一个是黑眼睛的瘦削男人，另一个总是满脸笑容，说话口齿不清。他们都是英国人。这一点我这位年轻的朋友十分肯定。

我拿出一张纸，用德文写出下列的字。我让这些文字看起来像是一页私人信件：

……黑石。斯卡德尔已经发现了。但在两周之内他没有办法。我觉得情况不妙，因为现在卡罗里德斯对他的行动还未下决心。但如果 T 先生要求那样，我会尽力……

“请把这个给他们，就说您在我卧室发现的。就说如果他们能找到我，把这个还给我。”

三分钟后，汽车启动了。从窗帘后面看到车里坐着两个人，一瘦一胖。

那个年轻人回来了。他异常兴奋。“那张纸让他们坐不住了。”他兴高采烈地说：“瘦子的脸变得煞白，胖子吹起了口哨。后来就忙不迭地走了。”

“来，我告诉您下一步怎么做，”我说。“去警察局告诉他们这两个人什么长相。并说您觉得他们和伦敦的谋杀案可能有关。这两个人明天早晨肯定回来再打听我的消息。告诉警察早点到这儿来。”

第二天早晨大约八点，我看到三个警察来了。他们把车隐蔽起来就进了旅店。二十分钟之后，又一辆车奔旅店开来，但停在离旅店大约二百米的树林中。车里的两个人向旅店走来。

本来我打算躲在卧室不出来，看看动向。现在我有更好的主意。我给年轻人写了张条子，对他的帮助表示感谢，然后打开窗户，跳了出去。我一边向树林里的汽车走去，一边小心翼翼地观察旅店的情形，然后跳进车，疾驰而去。

4 The political candidate

4 The political candidate

I drove that car across the moor as fast as I could, looking nervously over my shoulder. I was also thinking desperately about Scudder's notes.

Scudder had told me nothing but lies. All his stories about south-east Europe and people wanting to start wars were rubbish. But although he had told me lies, there was truth underneath.

The 15th of June was going to be an important day, but because of something more important than the murder of a Prime Minister. The story in his book was not complete, and there were some things I didn't understand—for example, the words 'thirty-nine steps', which appeared five or six times. The last time the words were used, Scudder had written 'Thirty-nine steps, I counted them—high tide at 10:17 p. m. '

The first thing I learned was that war was certain. Everything was planned. Karolides was going to be murdered and nothing could prevent it.

The second thing I learned was that Britain was not prepared for war. Karolides would be murdered and war would seem certain. Germany would pretend to be against war, but while we and they discussed peace, their submarines would silently fill the seas around us.

There was something else. Although the newspapers didn't know it, the British and French governments were close allies, and had agreed to prepare for war together. The most important officers in the armies and navies met regularly, and in June one of the top people was coming from Paris for a meeting. He would be told the exact details of the British Navy's preparations for war.

But on the 15th of June other people were going to be in London. Scudder didn't give names, but called them just the 'Black Stone'. They had a plan to get hold of this information, which was meant only for the French Government. And the information would be used by our enemies just a week or two later, with a most terrible effect.

My first idea was to write a letter to the British Prime Minister. But nobody would believe my story. I had to find proof that Scudder's story was true; and this would not be easy with the police and the Black Stone following me.

I drove to the east through a country at peace; but I knew that in a month's time, unless I was very lucky, men would be lying dead in this quiet countryside. I came into a village and I saw a policeman standing outside the Post Office and reading something carefully. He looked up at the car, stepped into the road, and held up a hand to stop me.

I almost did stop. But then I realized that the policeman had been reading about me. I supposed the police at the hotel had worked quickly and contacted all the local villages. I drove faster, the policeman jumped out of my way, and I was soon out of the village.

I left the main road as soon as possible and tried a smaller one. It was not easy without a map, and I realized that I had been stupid to steal the car. It would help the police and the Black Stone to find me in any corner of Scotland. If I left it, and went off on foot, they would find me in an hour or two.

I took a road that went along a narrow valley, and then up onto the moor again. I was very hungry; I had eaten nothing since morning. And now, as I drove, I heard a noise in the sky, and there was the plane.

On the moor it would see me in a minute. I drove as fast as I could down into another valley and towards a wood. Suddenly, a car appeared in front of me from a side road. There was no time to stop. I did the only thing possible and drove off the road into a hedge, hoping to hit something soft beyond. But I was out of luck. The car went through the hedge like a knife through butter, and immediately began to fall. I jumped out and was caught by the branch of a tree, while the car disappeared into a river fifteen metres below.

* * *

A hand helped me out of the tree, and a frightened voice asked me if I was badly hurt. The speaker was a young man who was very alarmed and very sorry. I was more pleased than angry; it was a good way for the car to disappear.

'It's my fault, 'I told him. 'That's the end of my holiday, but that's better than the end of my life! '

He looked at his watch. 'I'm in a hurry, but my house is very near. Let me give you

some food and a bed. But what about your luggage? Is it in the river? '

'It's in my pocket, 'I said. 'I'm from Australia, so I never carry much luggage. '

'From Australia, 'he cried. 'You're just the man I need. '

We got into his car and in three minutes we were at his very comfortable house. He found some food for me. 'You've only got five minutes, I'm afraid, but you can eat properly afterwards. We've got to be at the meeting at eight o'clock. You see, I'm a candidate for the election and I've got a problem tonight. I had arranged for Crumpleton, who was the Australian Prime Minister, to speak at the meeting tonight, but he's ill. I've got to speak for forty minutes, and I don't know what to say. Listen, Mr Twisdon, you haven't told me your name—Twisdon, you say? Well, Mr Twisdon, can you talk about Australia for a few minutes? '

It seemed strange to ask a man you had met in a car crash to speak at an election meeting, but I needed his help.

'All right, 'I said. 'I'm not a good speaker, but I'll speak for a bit. '

He was delighted. We got in his car, and on the way to the meeting he told me about his life. His name was Sir Harry Andrews and his uncle was in the government and had suggested politics as a job. He knew nothing about politics, but he was a friendly young man and I was glad to help him. When we arrived at the meeting, there were about five hundred people waiting. I was introduced as a 'trusted Australian leader' and then Sir Harry started to speak. It was mostly about preparing for war. He said the Germans didn't want a war and that if we stopped building new warships, the Germans would do the same. I thought about Scudder's black book in my pocket.

But behind all the rubbish I could see that Sir Harry was a nice man. And he spoke very badly. I knew I wasn't a good speaker, but I would be better than him.

I simply told them everything I knew about Australia. I said that Britain and Australia must work together and be friends. I think I was rather a success.

When we were back in his car again, Sir Harry was delighted. 'You spoke wonderfully, Twisdon, 'he said. 'Now you must stay for a few days. There's excellent fishing here. '

We had a good supper—which I needed—and sat in front of a fire in his sitting-room. I thought the time had come for me to tell the truth and see if this man could help me. 'Listen, Sir Harry, I've got something very important to say to you. You're an honest man, and I'm going to be honest too. Everything you said tonight was dangerous rubbish.' 'Was it? I wasn't sure myself. Do you think Germany is going to start a war with us? '

'In six weeks' time you won't need to ask me that Listen, and I'll tell you a story. '

I sat in front of the fire, in that peaceful room, and told him everything. He heard about Scudder, his notebook, the milk-man, and my travels in Scotland. It was the first time I had told the truth, all of it, to anyone, and I felt better.

'So you see, ' I said finally, 'I'm the man the police want for the Langham Place murder. You should call them at once.

He looked at me carefully. 'I know you're not a murderer, Hannay, and I believe you're speaking the truth. I'll help you. What do you want me to do? '

'First, write to your uncle. I must contact the government before the 15th of June. '

He pulled his moustache. 'That won't help you. My uncle isn't interested in foreign politics, and I don't think he'd believe you. No. I'll write to a friend of his, Sir Walter Bullivant, who works in the Foreign Office. He's an intelligent man and I think he'd help. What shall I say? '

So he wrote a letter to Sir Walter, saying that if a man named Twisdon came to him, he should help him. Twisdon would say the words 'Black Stone' and would whistle the song 'Annie Laurie', to prove who he was.

He told me where Sir Walter lived, and asked me what more he could do.

'Can you lend me some old clothes and give me a map? And if the police come, show them the car in the river. '

I then slept for three or four hours, until Sir Harry woke me at two o'clock. He gave me an old bicycle for the first part of the journey.

4 政治候选人。

我开车飞速穿越荒原，同时战战兢兢地回头张望，心里极力思考着斯卡德尔笔记本里的事。

斯卡德尔给我讲的全是谎话。什么东南欧、什么有人要发动战争，纯属胡说八道。他讲的虽然是假话，但其中也隐藏着真相。

六月十五日将是个重要的日期，因为那天会发生某件事，比谋杀希腊首相更要紧。他笔记本里的记述断续不全，有些事我也不明白——比如，“三十九级台阶”这几个词出现了五六次。最后一次斯卡德尔用这几个词时，他写道：“三十九级，我数了——涨潮时间，下午十点十七分。”

我搞明白的第一件事是战争肯定要爆发。一切都计划好了。卡罗里德斯死定了，无可挽救。

我搞明白的第二件事是英国对战争没有准备。卡罗里德斯将被杀死，而且战争看来

不可避免。德国会装出反对战争的样子，一边和我们探讨和平，同时悄悄把潜艇布满周围海域。

此外，英国和法国是亲密的盟友，有协议要共同备战，但是报界对此并不知情。双方陆、海军的高级军官定期会晤，六月份巴黎方面某个首脑人物要来开会。他将被告知英国海军备战的详细情况。

然而，六月十五日另外一批人也要到伦敦来。斯卡德尔没说他们叫什么，只称他们为“黑石”。他们制定了计划要把会晤情报搞到手，而这些情况只能让法国政府知道。一两周之后敌人会利用这个情报，那后果将不堪设想。

我第一个想法是给英国首相写封信。但是没有人会相信我的话。我必须找到证据说明斯卡德尔的话是真的；这可不那么容易，因为警察和黑石正在跟踪着我。

我开车向东通过宁静的乡村；而我清楚一个月之内，除非我幸运成事，否则这片宁静的乡野会横尸遍地。我驶进一个村庄，看到一个警察站在邮电局外面，正在专心致志地读着什么。他一抬头看到我的车，便走到路中央扬手示意叫我停车。

我差点停下来。但是转念一想，意识到警察刚才读的是有关我的消息。我猜到旅店的警察动作很迅速，已通知了各村的警察。我突然加速，吓得警察从路上跳开，转眼我便驶离村庄。

我尽快地从大路拐到小路看看情况。而没有地图谈何容易，我意识到偷这辆车是做了件蠢事。在苏格兰我无论躲到那个角落，这辆车都会帮着警察和黑石把我找到。如果弃车步行，他们一两个小时内也会找到我。

我驶向一条狭窄的山谷路，然后折身返回荒原。我从早晨就滴水未进，现在饥肠辘辘。我正开着车，听到空中有响声，是那架飞机。

在荒原上飞机转眼就会看到我。我尽快驶向另一个峡谷，然后奔树林而去。猛然间，从岔路上一辆汽车窜到我面前。停车已来不及了。唯一可能的是驶离道路，冲入篱墙，希望能撞在后面什么软东西上。然而我非常不走运。汽车穿过篱墙，一如餐刀切黄油般爽利然后马上向下跌落。我跳了出来，被挂在一个树枝上，而汽车消失在下面十五米的河中。

有一只手帮我从树上下来，我听到一个战战兢兢的声音问我是否伤得很重。说话的是个年轻人，他很吃惊也很歉疚。我与其说愤懑不如说欣慰，汽车这样消失很不错。

“这是我的错，”我对他说。“这一下假期算完了，但总比命没了好！”

他看了看表。“我正忙着，但我家很近。让我给您提供吃住吧。可是您的行李怎么办掉在河里了？”

“行李在我口袋里，”我说。“我从澳大利亚来，从来不多带行李。”

“从澳大利亚来，”他叫了起来。“我正需要您这么个人。”

我们坐上他的车，三分钟就来到他那舒适的家。他给我找了些吃的。“恐怕您只能吃五分钟，不过以后您可以好好吃一顿。八点我们必须去开会。您知道，我是这次选举的候

选人，而今天晚上我遇到个麻烦。我今晚本来安排的是克兰姆坡顿讲话，他是澳大利亚的总理，可他病了。这样我就要讲四十分钟，但不知道讲些什么。听我说，先生……您还没告诉我您叫什么……叫特维斯顿，对吧？好了，特维斯顿先生，您能不能用几分钟讲讲澳大利亚？”

车祸中你碰到个人，就拉他在选举会上讲话，真是不可思议，可我要他帮忙啊。

“好吧，”我说。“我讲不好，不过可以讲一会儿。”

他很高兴。我们坐进汽车，去开会的路上他把他的情况讲给我听。他叫哈里·安德鲁爵士，他叔叔在政府工作，劝他也从政。而他对政治一窍不通，但他年轻，为人和善，我很愿意帮助他。我们赶到会场，已经有五百来人等在那儿。我作为“可信赖的澳大利亚领导人”被介绍给大家，接着哈里爵士开始讲话。内容主要是如何备战。他说德国人并不想打仗，如果我们停止建造军舰，德国人也会同样做。我则想着口袋里斯卡德尔小笔记本上的事。

除了这一番胡言乱语，我可以看出哈里爵士为人不错。而讲话相当糟糕。我知道自己演讲水平也不怎么样，但总比 he 讲得好。

关于澳大利亚，我把知道的一古脑儿都端了出来。我讲到英国和澳大利亚要同舟共济，友好相处。我觉得我的讲话挺成功。

我们回到车上时，哈里爵士兴高采烈。“您讲得棒极了，特维斯顿，”他说。“您必须在这里呆几天。这有一个刮刮叫的垂钓活动。”

我们吃了一顿丰盛的晚餐——这正是我之所需——然后一块坐在客厅的火炉前。我觉得这正是把实情告诉他的时机，看此人能不能帮我一把。

“听我说，哈里爵士，我有非常重要的事情跟您说。您是个实在人，我也同样会实实在在。今天晚上您讲的都是危险的无稽之谈。”

“是吗？我自己还说不准。您认为德国要和我们开战吗？”

“六周之后您就不必问我了。听我说，我给您讲一件事。”

在那间宁静的屋子里，我坐在火炉前，把一切都告诉了他。他听着关于斯卡德尔、以及他的小笔记本、送奶员、以及我在苏格兰的历程。这是头一回我把真相，一切真相，告诉别人，心里感到好多了。

“您知道了，”末了我说，“我就是兰厄姆命案中警察要抓的那个人。您应该立刻报警。”

他审视着我。“我知道您不是凶手，相信您说的是实话。我会帮助您的。您需要我做什么？”

“首先给您叔叔写封信。六月十五日前我必须和政府取得联系。”

他捋着胡子。“那对您没用。我叔叔对外国政治没有兴趣，我觉得他不会相信您。不。

我会给他一位朋友写封信，他叫瓦尔特·布利万特爵士，在外交部工作。他很聪明，我想他会帮助您的。怎么样？”

于是他给布利万特爵士写了封信，信中说如果有个叫特维斯顿的人去找他，他应予帮助。特维斯顿会说暗语“黑石”，还会用口哨吹那首叫“安妮·劳里”的歌以证明他是谁。

他告诉我布利万特爵士的地址，又问还需要他做什么。

“您能借给我几件旧衣服再给我一张地图吗？再有，如果警察找来，领他们看看掉在河里的汽车。”

然后我睡了三四个小时，两点钟哈里爵士把我叫醒。他给了我一辆旧自行车以供我第一段路程之用。

5 The adventure of the roadman

5 The adventure of the roadman

I sat down at the top of a hill and rested. Behind me was a road climbing out of a river valley. In front were two kilometres of flat open country. To the left and the right were green hills. A kilometre down the road behind me I could see the smoke from a small house, but otherwise there was no sign of human life. There were only the sounds of birds singing and water flowing.

It was now about seven o'clock in the morning, and as I waited, I heard the sound of an engine in the air. I realized that I was in a bad position, because I had nowhere to hide.

I sat, hopelessly, as the aeroplane came nearer. It was high at first, but then it came down very low. I could see one of the two men looking at me very carefully. Then, suddenly, it went up and disappeared.

I had to think quickly. My enemies had found me, so now, I supposed, they would put a circle of men around the hills. They had probably seen my bicycle, so they would expect me to try and escape by road. I found a small lake about a hundred metres from the road and threw the bicycle in. Then I climbed to a higher bit of ground and looked around.

There was nowhere to hide. The moor was open, but to me it was like a prison. I started to walk to the north, and as I walked, I saw a car about fifteen kilometres away on the road. And, in the valley below me, I could see a line of men walking slowly upwards. The north was no good. I turned, and began to run southwards. I ran hard, watching the skyline in front of me, and soon I thought I could see distant figures on the hill. I turned again and ran down to the road.

If you have enemies all around you, the best plan is to hide while they search and do not find you. But there was nothing to hide in, nothing but the moor, the heather,

and the white road.

* * *

Then, in a bend in the road, I found the roadman. He had just started work mending the road, when he saw me.

I'm sorry I ever stopped farming! 'he said. 'I was my own boss then. Now I have to do what the government orders, and I'm a prisoner here with aching eyes and a bad back. And my head's going to explode! '

He was about the same age as me, and wore big black glasses. He started to work again, and then stopped.

'I can't do it, 'he cried. 'I'm going back to bed. '

I asked him what the problem was, although I could guess.

'It was my daughter's wedding last night, so we were dancing and drinking until four o'clock in the morning. And the new Road Inspector is coming to visit today! He'll come and not find me, or he'll come and find me like this. Whatever happens, I'm finished. '

Then I had an idea. 'Does this new Inspector know you? '

'No. He started last week. '

'Where's your house? 'He pointed to the small house I had seen before.

'Well, go back to bed, 'I said, 'and sleep in peace. I'll do your job for the day and see the Inspector. '

He stared at me for a minute, then smiled.

'You're the man for me! It's an easy job. 'He pointed to several big heaps of stones along the side of the road. 'Just put the stones down all along the edges of the road. My name's Alexander Turnbull, but my friends call me Ecky. If you speak to the Inspector politely, he'll be happy. I'll come back at five o'clock. '

I borrowed his glasses and a very dirty hat and gave him my good clothes. I also borrowed a very old pipe. My new friend walked off slowly to his bed. I hoped he would be inside his house when my enemies arrived.

I put as much dirt as possible on my face, hands and clothes, and rubbed some into my eyes to make them red. My boots did not look like a workman's boots, so I kicked them against the rocks to make them look older. The roadman had left his sandwiches and I was happy to eat some of them. There was still nothing moving on the road when I started work.

After some time I was getting hot, and I was beginning to count the hours until evening, when I heard a voice, and saw a young man in a small car looking at me.

'Are you Alexander Turnbull?' he said. 'I'm the new Road Inspector. You're doing these edges well, but there's a soft place about a kilometre down the hill. Don't forget that, will you? Goodday now.'

Clearly, the Inspector thought I was the roadman. As time passed, one or two other cars came along the road, and I bought some biscuits from a travelling shop. Finally, a big car stopped and two men got out and walked towards me. I had seen them before—from the window of the hotel. The fatter of the two looked at me with sharp bright eyes.

'Good morning,' he said. 'That's an easy job you've got there.'

'There are worse jobs and there are better jobs,' I said. I spoke in Alexander Turnbull's strong Scottish accent.

The other man was looking at my boots. 'You've very fine boots. Were they made near here?'

'Oh no, they were made in London. I was given them by a man who was here on holiday last year.'

The fatter man spoke to the other in German. 'Let's move on. This man can't help us.'

They did ask one more question.

'Did you see anyone pass early this morning? Either on a bicycle or on foot?'

I pretended to think carefully.

'I wasn't up very early. You see, my daughter got married yesterday and I went to bed late. I looked out of the house at seven and there was nobody on the road. And I've seen no bicycles this morning.'

The thin man gave me a cigar, which I smoked and then put in my pocket. Then they got into the car and were soon out of sight.

I continued to work on the road, and I was right to do so. Ten minutes later they passed again, watching me carefully.

I hoped Mr Turnbull would stay in bed and I began to wonder what to do next. I couldn't mend roads for ever.

Just before five o'clock an open touring car came up the road, and stopped a few metres from me. The driver wanted to light a cigarette, and, by an extraordinary chance, I knew him. His name was Marmaduke Jopley and he was a man I disliked very

much. He was only interested in people with money, and in visiting people who lived in beautiful houses in the country. I ran up to the car and took his arm.

'Hallo, Jopley.'

His mouth opened wide as he looked at me. 'Who are you?'

'My name's Hannay,' I said. 'You remember me.'

'The murderer!' he cried.

'Yes. And there'll be another murder if you don't help me. Give me your coat and hat.'

He did what I asked. He was very frightened. I put his coat and hat on, and put Mr Turnbull's hat on Jopley's head. I got in the car and started it.

'Now, my friend,' I said, 'you sit quietly and be a good boy. I'm going to borrow your car for an hour or two.'

I enjoyed the drive we had that evening. As we drove through the valley, I noticed some men beside the road, but they didn't look at us. I drove on into the hills and as it started to get dark, I turned up a small road and stopped in the middle of a lonely moor. I returned the hat and coat to Jopley.

'Thank you very much,' I said. 'You can be quite useful. Now you'd better go and find the police.'

As I sat on the moor and watched the car's lights disappear, I thought about my new life as a criminal. I was not a murderer, but I had developed a habit of stealing expensive cars.

5 修路人的奇遇

我坐在小山顶上休息。身后的道路从河谷爬上高原。眼前是两公里的开阔地。左右则是青山。后面沿路一公里处，可以看到一间小屋冒出的炊烟，此外再也看不到人烟。只听到鸟声呢喃和流水潺潺。

现在大约是早晨七点钟，我正在等待，突然听到发动机的声音。我发觉处境不妙，因为我无处藏身。

飞机越来越近，我无可奈何地坐在那儿。它开始飞得很高，后来飞低了。我可以看见两人中有一个仔细地打量着我。后来，突然又高飞远去了。

我要赶快想办法。敌人已经发现了我，所以我估计他们会派人包围这块山地。可能他们已经发现了我的自行车，估计我会顺道路拼命逃跑。距路大约一百米处有一汪小湖，我把自行车扔下去。然后又爬到一块高地，向四周瞭望。

没地方可躲。荒原非常开阔，但对我来说无异于监狱。我向北走，走着走着看见路上

大约十五公里开外有一辆汽车。在脚下的峡谷里可以看到一行人慢慢向山上爬来。北边不行。我转身开始向南。我望着前面的天边；使劲跑着，不一会儿，我觉得可以看清山上的人影了。我再折身奔向大路。

假如敌人包围了你，最好的办法是在他们搜你而不可得的时候藏着别动。然而这里却无处藏身，除了荒原、石楠丛和白色的道路外什么都没有。

后来，在拐弯处我见到那个修路人。我看见他的时候，他刚开始干活。

“我真后悔我怎么不种地了！”他说。“那么着我自己管自己。可现在政府叫我干什么就得干什么，搞得眼疼腰酸，整个是罪犯。我的头快要裂了！”

他和我年纪相仿，戴着墨镜。他干起活来，然后又停下手。

“我干不了，”他喊道。“回家睡觉去。”

我一猜便知，但还是问他是怎么回事。

“昨天晚上是我女儿的婚宴，所以我们喝酒、跳舞一直到早晨四点。可今天新的道路视察员要来视察！要么他来了找不到我，要么来了看到我像现在这个样子。无论如何，我算完了。”

当时我心生一计。“这个新视察员认识您吗？”

“不认识。他上周才来的。”

“您家在哪儿？”他指了指我刚才看到的那所小房子。

“好了，回家安心睡觉去吧。”我说，“今天我替您干活，替您见视察员。”他盯了我一会儿，然后笑了。

“您可救了我了！这个活不难干。”他指了指沿路边的几堆石头。“把这些石头都顺着路边倒下去就行了。我叫亚历山大·特恩布尔，朋友们都叫我艾可。您说话要是客客气气，视察员会高兴的。五点钟我回来。”

我把他的眼镜和脏衣服借来，把我的好衣服给他。又把旧烟斗借来。我这位新朋友慢慢腾腾地离开，回家睡觉去了。但愿我的敌人来的时候他在家里别出来。

我往脸上、手上、衣服上使劲抹土，并且把土揉进眼里使眼睛发红。我的靴子看着不像工人的，因此我使劲往石头上踢，以便变旧一点。修路工把他的三明治留下了，我很高兴地吃了点。开始工作了，路上仍然没有什么动静。

过了一会儿，我觉得越来越热，开始一小时一小时地数时间，直到傍晚，这时突然听到声音，看到小汽车里坐着个年轻人正在看着我。

“您是亚历山大·特恩布尔吗？”他问我。“我是道路视察员。这些路沿，您修得很好，不过山下大约一公里处有个地方泛松。别忘了修一修，好不好？再见吧。”

显而易见，这位视察员把我当作那个修路工了。时间一点点过着，一两辆汽车在路

上驶过，我又从流动商店里买了点饼干。最后一辆大卡车停下来，跳下两个人向我走来。以前我见过他们——从旅店的窗户里。那个胖点的瞪着一双犀利而明亮的眼睛望着我。

“早晨好，”他说。“您在这儿找了份儿轻闲差事啊。”

“有些事差点，有些事好点，”我回答。我说话带着亚历山大·特恩布尔的浓重苏格兰口音。

另外一个人则看着我的靴子。“您的靴子可不错。是附近做的吗？”

“啊，不是，是伦敦做的。这是去年有个人在这里度假，他给我的。”

胖点的用德语和另一个交谈。“我们走吧。这个人没用。”

他们又问了一个问题。

“今天早晨您看见什么人在这儿经过吗？或者骑车或者步行？”

我装作认真思考的样子。

“我今天起得不太早。您不知道，我女儿昨天结婚，我睡迟了。七点钟时我朝外边看了看，路上没人。整个上午也没见到自行车。”

那个瘦点的给了我一枝雪茄，我闻了闻就放进口袋。后来他们跳上汽车，很快就无影了。

我接着修路，这算是做对了。十分钟后他们又回来，仔细打量着我。

但愿特恩布尔先生还睡着，同时我开始思考下一步该怎么办。不能总是修路啊。

五点差一点儿，一辆敞篷旅游车开过来，停在离我几米的地方。司机想吸烟，巧得很，我认识他。他叫马默杜克·乔普利，这个人我非常讨厌。他的心思都用在有钱人身上，用在拜访住在乡间明屋广厦的主儿身上了。我跑向汽车，拉住他的胳膊。

“你好，乔普利。”

他张着嘴，看着我。“您是谁呀？”

“我叫哈内，”我说。“您记得吧？”

“杀人犯！”他叫了起来。

“不错。要是您不帮忙，还会有另一起谋杀。把您的外衣和帽子给我。”

他遵命了。他给吓坏了。我穿上他的外衣，戴上他的帽子，再把特恩布尔的帽子戴在乔普利头上。我跳上汽车，打着了火。

“听着，朋友，”我说，“您坐在这儿别出声，表现好点。把车借给我一两个小时。”

那天晚上我开着车，觉得很美。我们开车通过峡谷时，我发现路边有几个人，但他们没留意我们。我一直开到山里，天刚黑的时候，拐上一条小路，车停在荒凉的原野中央。我把帽子和外衣还给了乔普利。

“非常感谢，”我说。“想不到你也能派上大用场。你最好快走去找警察吧。”

我坐在荒原上，望着车灯光逐渐消逝，想着当罪犯的崭新生涯。我本不是杀人犯，可是已经养成了偷好车的习惯。

6 The bald writer

6 The bald writer

I spent the night in the hills, in some thick heather behind a rock. I had no coat and I was very cold. My coat, Scudder's notebook, my watch and even my pipe and tobacco were with Mr Turnbull. All I had was some biscuits.

I had half the biscuits for supper. and tried to keep warm in the heather. I was feeling quite pleased. So far I had been very lucky. The milkman, the man at the hotel, Sir Harry, the roadman and even Marmaduke had all helped me, and I felt that with help like this I might win. My main problem now was that I was very hungry. I fell asleep imagining the most beautiful meals.

I woke up very cold in the early morning. I looked down the hill, and in a second I was putting my boots on as fast as I could. There were men only a few hundred metres below me, walking up and searching the heather step by step.

Keeping low in the heather, I moved up the hill. At the top, I stood up and showed myself. I heard men shouting, and then I pretended to disappear over the top of the hill, but in fact I got down in the heather and crawled back down into the valley. After twenty minutes I looked back and saw the men disappearing over the top of the hill.

I didn't know where I was, but I knew I must keep moving. I was twenty minutes in front of them, but they were local men and they knew these hills better than I did. Soon they were close behind me and I was running as fast as I could. After a time I saw to my left some trees and the chimney of a farmhouse. I ran down towards them and found myself in a garden. As I came nearer the house, I saw an old man looking at me through an open door. I crossed the garden and went in.

I was in a pleasant room, with books everywhere. At a desk in the middle sat an old man with a kind face. He had glasses on the end of his nose, and the top of his bald head shone like glass. He didn't move, but looked up and waited for me to speak.

I was so surprised by his calmness that for a minute I just stared at him.

'You're in a hurry, my friend,' he said slowly.

I looked out of the window at the moor. We could both see the line of men walking through the heather.

'Ah, I see,' he said. 'The police are after you, are they? Well, we'll talk about it later. I don't like the police in my house when I'm working. Go through that door on the left and close it behind you. You will be safe in there.'

And this extraordinary man picked up his pen and started to write.

I did what he said, and found myself in a small room with only a very small window high up in one wall. The door closed behind me. Once again I had found somewhere to hide.

But I didn't feel comfortable. There was something strange about the old man. I had suddenly appeared in his house, but he didn't seem surprised. And his eyes were frighteningly intelligent. I waited, and tried to forget that I was very hungry. I thought about breakfast, and suddenly the door opened and there was the old man again.

'I told the police you had gone over the hill. This is a lucky morning for you, Mr Richard Hannay,' he said, smiling.

As he spoke, his eyes half closed, and immediately I remembered Scudder's description of a man who could hood his eyes like a hawk. I saw that I had walked into the hands of my enemies.

My first thought was to knock him down and run, but two men came through the door. They were carrying guns.

The old man knew my name, but he had never seen me before. I took a chance. 'I don't know what you mean,' I said roughly. 'And who are you calling Hannay? My name's Ainslie.'

'Of course, you have many names,' he said, still smiling. 'We won't argue about a name.'

I looked at him angrily. 'I suppose you're going to call the police back. I wish I'd never seen that car. Here's the money.' I put four pounds on the table.

'I won't call the police,' he said. 'This is a private problem between you and me.'

'Oh, stop it!' I cried. 'I've had no luck since I left my ship in Edinburgh. I found a crashed car and took a little money out of it, and I've had the police after me for two days. You do what you like. Ned Ainslie's finished.'

I could hear doubt in his voice when he next spoke.

'Would you be kind enough to tell me what you've been doing for the last few days?'

I can't. I haven't eaten for two days. Give me something to eat and I'll tell you the truth. 'I put on my best begging voice.

Some food was brought to me, and while I was eating, he said something to me in German. I stared at him stupidly. Then I told him my story. I was a sailor, and I had left my ship in Edinburgh to travel across Scotland to see my brother. I had found a car in a river and taken some money from it. But the police were now chasing me.

'They can have their money back, 'I cried. 'It's only brought me trouble! '

'You're good at lying, Hannay, 'he said.

I started to get very angry. 'My name's Ainslie and I don't know anybody called Hannay. I'd rather have the police than you and your gun and your Hannays. No, I'm sorry, sir, I'm grateful for the food, but I'd like to go now. '

I could see that he was not sure. He had never seen me, and I suppose I did not look like my photograph.

'I won't let you go. If you are Mr Ainslie, then you'll soon be able to prove it. If you're not, then I have a surprise for you. '

He rang a bell, and a third servant appeared.

'I want the car in five minutes, 'he said. 'There will be three for lunch. '

Then he looked at me, and that was the most frightening thing of all. His eyes were unnatural-bright, cold and evil. I tried to stare back, and even to smile.

'You'll know me next time we meet, 'I said.

'Karl, 'he said, speaking in German. 'Put this man in the back room until I return. '

I was taken out of the room with a gun at each ear.

* * *

The back room was very dark and full of old bottles and boxes. The windows had shutters on the outside. The key turned in the door, and I could hear the feet of the guards outside.

I sat down feeling very unhappy. The old man had gone to collect his friends, the men who had talked to me when I was the roadman. They would soon discover that I was not the roadman, nor Mr Ainslie, but Richard Hannay. I began to wish I had been found by the police; I would feel safer with them than with this man and his two friends.

They were coming for lunch, so I had only two hours. I tried the windows but they would not move. I felt the boxes and bottles, and then found a door in the wall. It was a

cup—board door, and it was locked. I had nothing else to do so I pulled on it until it opened.

There were a lot of things inside. On one shelf there were some matches, and I used them to look more closely. At the back of one shelf was a strong wooden box. I broke it open and found, to my surprise, some fuses and several small square packets of explosive.

I knew that with these I could blow the house up. The problem was that I didn't know how much to use. If I used too much, I would blow myself up. But if I didn't use them at all, I would be dead in three hours.

I put one of the squares of explosive near the door, and put a fuse from there to the other side of the room. I lit the fuse and hid behind some boxes. There was silence for five seconds...

The wall exploded into a bright yellow light, something fell on my left arm, and I became unconscious.

I was unconscious for only a few seconds. Then I stood up, trying not to breathe the yellow smoke. The window had been blown out and I climbed out into the garden. Across the garden there were some buildings, and one was an old tower. I felt too ill to go very far, and that seemed the best hiding place.

The climb up the outside of that tower was the most difficult thing I ever did. My head felt terrible, and the smoke had made me very sick, but in the end I managed it, and lay down at the top. Then I became unconscious again.

When I woke up, my head was burning and the sun was shining into my face. I lay for a long time without moving. I could hear men talking. I looked through a hole in the wall and saw men with guns. There was the bald man and I thought I could see the fat one too.

For half an hour they searched all the buildings. They came to the door at the bottom of my tower, and for a minute I thought they were going to come up, but the door was locked.

All afternoon I lay on that roof. I was terribly thirsty, and, to make it worse, I could see and hear a small stream which came off the moor and flowed near the farm. I wanted a drink of that cool clear water more than anything in the world.

From the tower I could see all the moor around. I saw two women go off in a car, and another man on a horse, and I imagined they were looking for me. But I could also see something more interesting. At the top of the hill behind the house was a ring of trees with grass inside. It was clear that this was where the plane landed.

It was an excellent place for an airfield. It could not be seen from below because it was at the top of the hill; from the valley, the hill seemed covered with trees. And anyone watching the plane coming in to land would think it was just flying over the hill. I realized that if the plane arrived now, the pilot would probably see me, so I lay still, and hoped night would come quickly.

Luckily, when the plane did arrive, it was almost dark. I watched it land, and then waited until everything was quiet. There was no moon, and I was too thirsty to wait, so at nine o'clock I climbed down. Halfway down, somebody came out of the house with a light, and I froze. Then the light disappeared and I continued down to the ground.

I crawled as far as the trees. I guessed that the house would be guarded in some way, so I continued very slowly and carefully, and found a wire about sixty centimetres from the ground. Falling over that would doubtless start alarm bells ringing in the house.

A hundred metres further on there was another wire, but after that it was the open moor. Ten minutes later I had my head in the stream and I drank litres of cold water.

I did not stop again until I was ten kilometres from that terrible house.

6 秃头作家

那天我就在山里岩石后的茂密石楠丛里过夜。我身上没大衣，觉得很冷。我的大衣、斯卡德尔的笔记本、我的手表、甚至我的烟斗和烟都留在特恩布尔先生那儿了。尽我所有只是一点饼干。

我吃了一半饼干当晚餐，偎在石楠丛里尽量保持热量。而我心里觉得乐滋滋的。迄今为止，我运气还不错。送奶员、旅店老板、哈里爵士、修路人甚至马默杜克都帮了我的忙，有这样的帮助我觉得会成功。现在主要问题是我太饿了。我梦想着一顿顿美餐昏昏入睡。

大清早我一睁眼就觉得冷得不得了。向山下看了看，我分秒必争地穿上鞋。离我只有数百米的下面有一伙人向上爬着，仔细地搜索着石楠丛。

我在石楠丛里紧贴着地面向山上爬。到了山顶，我站起来不再躲藏。我听到人们的呐喊声，于是便假装向山的那坡逃去，而实际隐身于石楠丛中，向下又爬回峡谷。二十分钟后我回头看看，那些人正在越过山顶向那一坡追去。

我不知道我在什么地方，只知道我必须不停地走。我领先他们二十分钟，但他们是当地人，对这片山地比我熟悉。不久他们就紧紧跟了上来，我就竭力地跑着。过了一会儿我看到左首有一片树林和一家农舍的烟囱。于是就奔那里跑去，不觉得到了一个庭院里。我向房子走去，这时一个老头开着门正在瞧着我。我穿过庭院，进了屋。

我进了一间很不错的屋子，屋子里摆满了书。中间放着一张书桌，桌旁坐着一位老人，神态慈祥。鼻尖上架着一副眼镜，头顶秃秃的像玻璃一样闪着光。他一动不动，抬着头等着我开口。

他的镇定出乎我意料，以至于有一会儿我只是呆呆地望着他。

“朋友，您很着急呀，”他缓缓地说。

我透过窗户向荒原望去，我们俩都看到一队人正穿行于石楠丛中。

“我明白了，”他说。“警察在追您，是不是？这事我们过一会儿再说。我干活的时候不喜欢警察到我家来打搅。请走左边的门，随手把门关上。那里很安全。”

这位不同寻常的老人拿起笔写起字来。

我听他的，不觉来到一间小屋，只有一个小窗户还开得很高。门已经关好。我又找到藏身之处了。

然而我觉得不自在。这个老头哪里有点怪。我突然闯进屋，可是看来他一点也不吃惊。他那双眼睛睿智得叫人害怕。我在那儿等着，极力不去想辘辘饥肠。我正在想着早饭，门突然打开了，又是那个老头。

“我告诉警察您已经翻山走了。理查德·哈内先生，今天上午您真运气。”他笑着说。

他说话的时候，眼睛眯着，我猛地记起斯卡德尔说过一个人，这个人能“像猫头鹰那样眯着眼睛”。我意识到我已经走到敌人的手心里来了。

我第一个想法是把他打倒然后逃跑，可是两条汉子推门而入。他们手里都拿着枪。

老头知道我叫什么，但从来没见过我。我想碰碰运气。“我不明白您说什么，”我粗声粗气地说。“您叫谁哈内？我的名字叫安斯利。”

“当然，您有好多名字，”他仍然笑着说。“别为名字抬杠了。”

我忿忿然地看着他。“我猜您要把警察叫回来。当初要是没见到那辆车就什么事也没有了。”我把四英磅放在桌子上。

“我不会叫警察，”他说。“这是你我之间的私事。”

“得了，住口吧！”我喊起来。“从爱丁堡一下船我就不顺。碰到一辆撞坏的汽车，从里边拿了点钱，结果警察追了我两天。您爱怎么样随便好了。奈德·安斯利算完了。”

他又开始说话，从声音里我可以听出他的犹豫不决。

“劳您驾能不能告诉我最近几天您都干什么了？”

“不行。我两天没吃饭了。给我点东西吃，然后我实话实说。”我尽量装出恳求的声调。

饭给我端来了，我一边吃他一边用德语对我讲什么。我就傻呼呼地盯着他。然后把我的故事讲给他听。我是个海员，从爱丁堡下的船，路过苏格兰去看我兄弟。在那里我看到一辆汽车，于是在里边拿了点钱。可警察就一直紧追不舍。

“他们可以把钱拿回去嘛，”我叫道。“这点钱净给我添乱！”

“哈内，您挺会撒谎的，”他说。

我发起怒来。“我叫安斯利，不认识什么叫哈内的人。我宁可让警察抓住也比叫您、您的枪和您的哈内抓住好。对不起，先生，我不干，感谢您的饭，现在我想走了。”

可以看出他犹豫不决了。他从来没见过我，而且，我猜我看起来也不像我的照片。

“我不让您走。假如您是安斯利先生的话，很快您就能证明一点。假如您不是，那么我会让您大吃一惊。”

他按门铃，第三个仆人来了。

“五分钟后我要用车，”他说。“预备三个人的午餐。”

然后他就看着我，那目光比什么都可怕。他的眼睛不同寻常——明亮、阴冷、邪恶。我极力以眼还眼，甚至极力装出笑脸。

“下回再见面您就认识我了，”我说道。

“卡尔，”他用德语说。“把这个人放到后面的屋里等我回来再说。”

我被拉出屋去，一边耳朵顶着一枝枪。

后面的屋黑洞洞的堆满旧瓶子和破箱子。窗户外面安着百叶窗。钥匙插在锁孔里，我可以听到外面卫兵的脚步声。

我坐下来，感到心情很不好。那个老头去叫他的朋友，那些人在我装修路人的时候和我说过话。他们很快就会知道我既不是修路人，也不是安斯利先生而是理查德·哈内。我想还不如让警察抓住的好；让警察抓住比让这个人和他那两个朋友抓住我觉得安全些。

他们要回来吃午饭，所以我只有两个小时的时间。我试着打开窗户，可是弄不动。我摸索着箱子、瓶子，后来发现墙上有个门，是壁橱的门，紧锁着。除此无法可想，所以我就使劲拉那个门，门被打开了。

屋里放着好多东西。在一个书架上有火柴，我点着火柴，更仔细地观察着。在一个书架后面放着个硬木箱。我把箱子打开，出乎我的意料，里面有导火索和若干方形包装的炸药。

我知道用这些炸药可以把整座房子炸飞。问题是我不知道该用多少炸药。如果用得太多，那么会连我自己也被炸飞。而要是索性不用，那么用不了三个小时我就得完蛋。

我把一包炸药放在门边，把导火索从那儿接到屋的另一头。我点着导火索，躲在箱子后面。五秒钟内默无声息……

轰然一声，屋墙被炸成亮黄色的火光，什么东西砸到我的左臂上，后来就失去了知觉。

我只昏迷了几秒钟。然后我站起来，尽量不呼吸炸药的黄烟。窗户被炸开了，我爬窗而出，跳到庭院里。庭院的对面是房子，其中有一个古塔。我感觉太难受，没法走远，看

来这个塔是个最好的藏身之所。

从塔的外面向上爬，我从来没干过这么难的事。我头疼得要命，硝烟熏得我很难受，但最后终于爬了上去，在塔顶上躺下来。后来我又昏过去了。

醒来时我觉得头发烧，阳光照在我的脸上。我一动不动地躺了好长时间。我可以听到人们的说话声。透过墙上的窟窿我看到人们都拿着枪。有那个秃头的人，我想还会有那个胖子。

他们把所有建筑物搜索了半个小时。他们又来到塔底的门口，我一闪念，以为他们准备要上来，然而门给锁上了。

我在塔顶躺了整整一个下午。我口渴得要命，更糟糕的是我可以看到也可以听到从荒原上流来一条小溪，在附近的田野里淌着。要是能喝上一口这么清凉的水，这世界上什么东西我都不想要了。

从塔顶可以看到四周的荒原。我看见两个人坐车走了，另一个则骑着马，我估计他们正在找我。我还看见了更有意思的东西。在房子后面的山顶上，树围成一个圆圈，圈里是草地。很显然，这是飞机降落的地方。

这个地方作机场太好了。它位于山顶，所以从下往上看不到；从山谷向上看，看到山好像被树覆盖着。所以，如果有人看到飞来要降落的飞机还以为飞机正在飞越山顶。我意识到如果现在飞机飞过来，驾驶员多半会看见我，所以我躺着一动不动，盼着天快点黑下来。

运气真是不错，飞机真地飞过来的时候，天差不多黑了。我望着飞机降落，然后等着一切归于平静。天上没有月亮，我渴得等不下去了，于是九点钟我爬了下去。走了一半我看见有人拿着灯从房里出来，我吓得僵住了。后来灯光不见了，我接着走到平地上。

我沿着树林一直爬。我估计着那所房子会怎么布置警戒，所以，我慢慢地、小心翼翼地爬，看到有一截电线露出地面大约六十厘米。如果绊上肯定会引响房里的警铃。

一百米开外还有一段电线，后面便是开阔的荒原。爬了十分钟，我一头扎进小溪，喝了好几升凉水。

我跑出距那所可怕的房子有十公里才停下脚。

7 The fisherman

7 The fisherman

I sat on a hill-top and thought about my next move. I wasn't very happy, because although I had escaped, I was feeling very ill. The smoke had been very unpleasant, and the day on the roof had made things worse. I had a terrible headache, and my arm hurt so badly that I could not move it.

I decided to go back to Mr Turnbull's house and find my clothes and Scudder's notebook. Then I would take a train to the south. The sooner I met Sir Harry's friend in the

government, Sir Walter Bullivant, the better. I hoped he would believe my story, but, even if he did not, I would be safer with him, or even the British police, than with those men at the farmhouse.

It was a clear, starry night and easy to find my way across the hills. I thought I was probably about thirty kilometres from Mr Turnbull's house, so I could not get there in one night. I would have to hide somewhere for the day. When it started to get light, I stopped to wash in a river and then knocked on the door of a small house. I told the woman who lived there that I had had a bad fall, and she could see that I was not well. She gave me some milk and whisky. She also gave me an old coat and hat of her husband's. I now looked like every other Scotsman, and felt safer.

It started to rain, and I spent the afternoon under a rock. That night was the most miserable of all. There were no stars, and I got lost at least twice. I had about fifteen kilometres more to go, but I think I walked thirty. In the end, in the very early morning, in a thick fog, I knocked on Mr Turnbull's door.

Mr Turnbull opened the door wearing an old black suit and tie. At first he did not recognize me.

'What are you doing here at this time on a Sunday morning? '

My head was so bad that I could not answer for a moment, but then he recognized me, and saw that I was ill.

'Have you got my glasses? 'he asked.

I took them out of my pocket and gave them to him.

'You want your clothes, 'he said. 'Come in. You're not looking well at all. Come and sit down. '

I realized that my malaria had come back. I had had malaria in Africa, and it returned sometimes. The smoke, my arm, the wet and the cold had probably not helped. Soon, Mr Turnbull was helping me into a bed.

He was a good friend, that roadman. He took care of me for ten days, until my fever had gone and my arm was much better. He went out to work every day, locking the door, and in the evening he sat by the fire. He asked no questions, but on some days he brought me a newspaper, and I saw that the excitement over the Langham Place murder was over.

One day he gave me my money back. 'There's a lot of money there. You'd better count it and see if it's all there. '

I wanted to move as soon as possible, but it was not until the 12th of June that I felt well enough to go. I made Turnbull accept some money for my food, but it was difficult.

I walked the twenty kilometres to the station in a day. The train to London did not leave until night, so I rested in the heather until it arrived. I was very happy to be in the train, and on the way south.

* * *

I slept on the train until early morning. Then I changed trains two or three times. At about eight o'clock in the evening I arrived at the small station at Artinswell, to the west of London. The road led through a wood into a green valley. Soon I came to a bridge and looked down into the river, whistling the song 'Annie Laurie'.

A fisherman walked up from the river, and as he got near to me, he started to whistle the same song. He was a big man in old clothes and a wide hat. He smiled at me, and I looked at his kind, intelligent face.

'The water's clear, isn't it?' he said. 'Look at that big fish lying on the bottom. I've been trying to catch him all evening.'

'I can't see him,' I said.

'Look, over there, near those plants.'

'Oh yes, I can see him now. He looks like a black stone.'

He whistled again, then paused. 'Your name's Twisdon, isn't it?'

'No,' I said. 'I mean yes. I had forgotten the name I had given Sir Harry.'

'It's a good idea to know your own name,' he said, smiling.

I looked at him again and began to think that this kind, intelligent man would be a real ally at last.

Then he pointed to a house by the river and said quietly, 'Wait five minutes, then come to the backdoor.' He walked

I did as he asked, and found the back door open and a servant waiting.

Come this way, sir,' he said, and took me to a bedroom. There were clothes waiting for me, and shaving things. 'There's a bathroom next door. Dinner is in half an hour.'

The servant left, and I sat down. I was very surprised, but also delighted, Sir Walter clearly believed that I was not a murderer, although when I looked at myself in the mirror, I thought I looked very much like one.

I had a bath and shaved and put on the clothes. When I had finished, I looked in the mirror again. This time I saw a completely different young man.

Sir Walter was waiting for me in the dining room. I decided I must tell him the truth about myself immediately.

'I must thank you very much, but I must make something clear,' I said. 'I'm not a murderer, but the police want me. If you'd like me to leave, I'll leave now.'

He smiled. 'That's all right. We won't let it stop us eating. Let's talk after dinner.'

The food and wine were excellent. After dinner we went to the sitting-room for coffee and he looked at me.

I've done what Harry asked me to do,' he said. 'He told me you'd tell me a story to wake me up if I did. So what is your story, Mr Hannay?'

I noticed that he was using my real name.

I told him the whole story, from the night I came home and found Scudder at my door. I told him what Scudder had told me about Karolides, and saw him smile once or twice. Then I told him about the murder, and the milkman, and Scotland, and Scudder's notebook.

'You've got it here?' he asked, and looked pleased when I took it from my pocket.

I said nothing about what I had read in Scudder's notes. Then I told him about my meeting with Sir Harry, and he laughed. My day as a roadman interested him. He made me describe the two men in the car, and seemed to be thinking hard. Then he laughed again at my adventure with Mar — the duke of Jopley. When I described the old man in the farm-house, he stopped smiling.

'Old, bald, and hooded his eyes like a hawk. I don't like the sound of him. And you blew up his house. You're a brave man.'

I reached the end of my story. He stood up, by the fire, and looked down at me.

'You don't need to worry about the police,' he said. 'They don't want you any more.'

'Have they arrested the murderer?'

'No. But they know it's not you.'

'How?'

'Because I heard from Scudder. I knew him a bit. He was a strange man, but he was honest. I had a letter from him on the 31st of May.'

'But he'd been dead for a week by then.'

'The letter was written and posted on the 23rd. His letters usually went to Spain and then Newcastle, so they took a week to arrive.'

'What did he say? '

'That he was in danger. He said he was living in Langham Place, and that he was with a good friend. I think he wanted to help you in case he was murdered. When I got the letter, I went to Scotland Yard and talked to the police.'

You can imagine that I felt ten times better. I was a freeman, and my only enemies were my country's enemies.

'Now, let's see this notebook,' said Sir Walter.

It took us an hour to work through it. I explained the code and he understood very quickly. When we had finished, he sat silent for a while.

'I don't understand all of this,' he said at last. 'He's right about one thing, and that is the meeting on the 15th. How can anyone have discovered about that? But all this about war and the Black Stone—it's very strange. Scudder did like to make things seem important and exciting.'

'The Black Stone,' he repeated. 'It's like a cheap detective story. And all this about Karolides can't be true. Karolides will be alive when we're both dead. No, Scudder's wrong there. There are some unpleasant things going on. Scudder found something out and got killed for it. But all this about stealing the Navy's war plans...I can't really believe it.'

Just then, the servant came into the room.

'There's a telephone call from London for you, sir.'

Sir Walter went out. He came back five minutes later with a white face. 'I apologize to Scudder,' he whispered, and then looked at me. 'Karolides was shot dead at seven o'clock this evening.'

7 渔夫

我坐在山顶上，考虑下一步怎么办。我不太开心，因为虽然我逃出来，可是感觉很难受。火药的烟味很难闻，而且在塔顶上藏了一整天更让人受不了。我头疼欲裂，胳膊伤得动也动不了。

我决定还回特恩布尔先生的家，找回我的衣服和斯卡德尔的笔记本。然后乘火车向南走。我越早见到哈里爵士在政府的朋友，瓦尔特·布利万特爵士就越好。希望他能相信我的话，即使不相信，和他呆在一起，或者和英国警察呆在一起也比和这间农舍的家伙在一起要安全。

夜色晴朗，繁星满天，翻山寻路并不困难。我思忖距特恩布尔先生的家大概有三十公里左右，看来一夜到不了。白天我得藏在什么地方。天一放亮，我停药在河里洗了把脸然后去敲一所小屋的门。我对小屋的女主人说我摔得很厉害。她可以看出我情形不好。她

给了我点牛奶和威士忌，还把她丈夫的旧外套和帽子送给我。现在我看上去和别的苏格兰人没什么两样，因此感到安全多了。

天开始下起雨来，我在岩石下面躲了一下午。那是最为狼狈的一晚。天上一颗星也没有，至少有两次我迷了路。大约还要走十五公里，而我觉得已经走了三十公里。最后，在大清早，在浓雾弥漫之中，我敲响了特恩布尔先生家的门。

特恩布尔先生开了门，身穿一套黑色的旧衣服，打着领带。头一眼他没有认出我来。

“大礼拜天这个时候您在这儿干吗？”

我头疼得太厉害，一下回答不出，而他认出了我，看出我生病了。

“您带着我的眼镜了吗？”他问道。

我从口袋里掏出眼镜，还给他。

“您要您的衣服，”他说。“请进。您看来不太舒服。请进来坐下吧。”

我觉得我的疟疾又发作了。在非洲我得过疟疾，后来时而发作。烟熏、胳膊伤、受潮、着凉大概没起好作用。特恩布尔先生很快扶我上床。

这个修路人真够朋友。他服侍了我十天，直到我高烧退去，胳膊也大见好转为止。他每天锁上门出去上班，晚上回来坐在火炉旁。他什么也不问，有时给我带来张报纸，我得以知道关于兰厄姆谋杀案的轰动已经过去了。

一天，他把钱还给我。“这么多钱。最好数一数看是不是都在。”

我想尽快动身，但是直到六月十二日我才感到恢复得足以走路。我设法叫特恩布尔收下点饭钱，但真是难上加难。

我朝车站走，一天走了二十公里。去伦敦的火车要到晚上才开车，因此我躲在石楠丛里，休息到火车进站。跳上火车，奔南而去，我心里喜气洋洋。

我在火车上一觉睡到大天亮。后来我倒了三四次车。大约晚上八点钟，我赶到阿廷斯维尔的一个小站，这个地方位于伦敦的西边。沿路而行穿过一片树林，就到了一个绿油油的峡谷。我很快走上一座桥，一边用口哨吹着那首叫“安妮·劳里”的歌，边低头望着河水。

一个渔夫从河那边走来，走到我身边时，口哨吹起同一首歌。他身材魁梧，穿一身旧衣服，戴一顶宽边帽。他对着我微笑，而我则看着他那张慈祥睿智的脸。

“水很清，是不是？”他说。“看水底那条鱼多大。我折腾了一个晚上一直想把它抓住。”

“看到了，”我说。

“看，就在那儿，在水草旁边。”

“啊，是，我看到了。看起来像块黑石。”

他又吹起口哨，然后停下来。“您叫特维斯顿，是吗？”

“不，”我说。“我想说的是对。”我把自己告诉哈里爵士的那个名字忘记了。

“很想知道您的真名，”他说着笑了。

我看了他一眼，心里开始想着这位和蔼机敏的人大概最终是我真正的战友。

他指着河边的一座房子平静地说：“请等五分钟，然后到后门去。”说完就离开了。

我照办了，发现后门开着，有个仆人等在那里。

“先生，请这边走，”他说着，把我领到一间卧室。卧室里为我准备好了衣服和刮脸用具。“旁边的门是浴室。半个小时后开饭。”

仆人走后我坐了下来。我感到惊喜交加。瓦尔特爵士显然不相信我是杀人犯，虽然照着镜子我觉得自己很像。

我洗了个澡，刮了刮脸，然后换上给我准备的衣服。完事后又重新照了一番镜子，这回我看到是一个截然不同的年轻人。

瓦尔特爵士正在餐厅里等我。我决定立刻把我的全部真实情况告诉他。

“非常感谢您，有些事我得给您讲清楚，”我说。“我不是杀人犯，可是警察在追捕我。如果您要我离开，我便马上走。”

他笑了。“好了。不要让这个打搅我们吃饭。吃过再谈吧。”

好酒好饭真是美餐一顿。饭后到客厅喝咖啡，他看着我。

“我遵哈里爵士之嘱把您请到这儿来，”他说。“他说您会告诉我一件事，如果我以前蒙在鼓里这件事会使我翻然醒悟。那么到底是什么事呢，哈内先生。”

我发觉他在使用我的真名字。

我从那天晚上回到家，在门口遇到斯卡德尔先生开始，把一切都告诉了他。我告诉了他斯卡德尔给我讲的有关卡罗里德斯的事，在这过程中我看到他笑了一两次。我又对他说起那次谋杀、那个送奶员、苏格兰流亡以及斯卡德尔的笔记本。

“您拿来了？”他问道。我从口袋里掏出笔记本，他面露喜色。

至于我在斯卡德尔的笔记本上看到了什么，我只字未提。接着我讲到如何见到哈里爵士，他听着笑了。他对我装修路人的那天很感兴趣。他让我详细描述一下车上的那两个人，看来他在认真思考着。接着我谈到与马默杜克的奇遇，他又笑起来。当我说到农舍里的那个老头，他的笑容收敛了。

“上了年纪、秃头而且像猫头鹰那样眯着眼睛。听起来这个人讨人喜欢。您把他的

房子给炸了。您真有胆量。”

我讲完了。他从火炉旁站起来，低头看着我。

“您不用担心警察，”他说。“他们不再追捕您了。”

“他们抓到凶手了吗？”

“没有。但他们知道不是您。”

“他们怎么知道的？”

“因为我收到了斯卡德尔的信。我对他略有所知。他很古怪，但很诚实。五月三十一日我收到他一封信。”

“可是那时他已经死了一周了。”

“那封信是二十三日写好寄出的。他的信一般走西班牙，然后转纽卡速尔，所以要一周才能收到。”

“他说什么了？”

“他说他处境危险。他住在兰厄姆，和一个好朋友住在一起。我想他是为了在万一被害后仍能帮您一把。接到信我就去苏格兰场告诉了警察。”

可以想像我的无限欣悦之情。我是个自由人了，而且我的唯一敌人也是我的国家的敌人。

“咱们瞧瞧这个笔记本，”瓦尔特爵士说。

我们花了一个小时看了一遍。我解释着暗语，他很快就明白了。完事之后，好半天他坐着一声不吭。

“我不全懂，”他最后说。“有一件事他说对了，就是十五号的会议。但别人怎么可能知道呢？而关于战争、黑石这一切——听起来非常离奇。斯卡德尔确实喜欢把事情搞得看起来不同一般而又撩拨人心。”

“黑石，”他重复说。“似乎像粗制滥造的侦探小说。而关于卡罗里德斯，这一切都不可能是真的。即使我们都死了，卡罗里德斯还会活着。不对。这点斯卡德尔搞错了。近来让人讨厌的事连续不断。斯卡德尔发现了某件事。他因此被杀。但是关于盗窃海军作战计划等等这一切……我简直不能相信。”

恰好仆人进来了。

“先生，伦敦给您来的电话。”

瓦尔特爵士出去了。五分钟后回屋来，脸色煞白。“我得向斯卡德尔道歉，”他低声说，然后看着我。“卡罗里德斯今天晚上七点钟被枪杀了。”

8 The coming of the black stone

8 The coming of the black stone

I came down to breakfast the next morning and found Sir Walter reading a coded message. He seemed less relaxed than yesterday.

I was very busy for an hour after you went to bed, 'he said. 'I've arranged for the Frenchman, Royer, to come a day early. He will be in London at five o'clock. I don't think the change of day will help very much. If our enemies already knew he was coming, they will probably find out that the plans have changed. I would love to know how the news of his visit escaped. '

While I ate, he continued to talk. I was surprised that he was telling me all these important secrets.

'Can't the Navy's war plans be changed? 'I asked.

'They could, 'he said. 'But we want to avoid that. It would be very difficult, and some changes would be impossible. But the big problem is that they're not going to steal the plans in the street. They'll try to get the details without anybody knowing, and Royer will return to Paris thinking that everything is still secret. '

'Then we must stay at Royer's side until he is home again, 'I said.

'Royer will meet us after dinner at my house in London: there'll be Whittaker from the Navy, myself, Sir Arthur Drew, and General Winstanley. The First Sea Lord, the head of the Navy, has been ill, and may not be able to come. Whittaker will give Royer the important papers, and then Royer will be driven to Portsmouth where a Navy ship will take him to France. He will be watched until he is back there. Whittaker will be watched while he has the papers before he meets Royer. It's the best we can do, and I don't see what can go wrong. But I'm very nervous because of the murder of Karolides. '

After breakfast he asked me to be his driver for the day. 'You know what these people are like, and I don't want to take risks. '

In London we went first to Scotland Yard where we met an important-looking policeman.

'I've brought you the Langham Place murderer, 'said Sir Walter. The policeman smiled. 'I wish you had. I imagine you are Mr Hannay. We were very interested in you for a few days. '

'Mr Hannay will interest you again, MacGillivray, but his story must wait twenty-four hours. But I would like you to tell Mr Hannay that you don't want to arrest him any more. '

'Of course we don't. 'The policeman turned to me. 'Your flat and your servant are waiting for you, although you may not want to return there. '

As Sir Walter and I left, he said I was free for the rest of the day. 'Come and see me tomorrow, Hannay. I don't need to tell you to keep everything secret. You had better stay out of sight. If your Black Stone friends see you, there might be trouble. '

* * *

I didn't know what to do. It was strange to be a free man. I went to a very good restaurant for lunch, but I was still feeling nervous. When anybody looked at me, I wondered if they were thinking about the murder. I walked around London, thinking. I knew that by now Royer would be in England, and I felt sure that something terrible was going to happen and that only I could stop it. But it was not my business now.

I didn't want to go back to my flat. I had to go back sometime, but I decided to stay at a hotel tonight.

I had supper in another restaurant, and thought that after that I would go to Sir Walter's house. He might not want me there, but I would feel happier if I went.

As I walked through London towards his house, I met a group of young men. One of them was Marmaduke Jopley.

'It's the murderer! 'he cried. 'Stop him! That's Hannay, the Langham Place murderer! 'He took hold of my arm, and the others crowded round me.

I didn't want trouble, but I was feeling angry. A policeman came up, and instead of explaining the mistake to him quietly and sensibly, I just hit out wildly at Marmaduke's stupid face. I felt much happier when he was lying on his back in the road. Then a general fight started, until the policeman got hold of me. I heard him ask what the matter was, and Marmaduke, talking through his broken teeth, told him that I was Hannay the murderer.

I was so angry that I pushed the policeman one way and one of Marmaduke's friends the other, and ran as fast as I could. There was shouting behind me, but I had escaped. I ran all the way to Sir Walter's house, walked up to the door and rang. I hoped the door would open quickly.

It did.

'I must see Sir Walter, 'I said to the servant. 'It's desperately important. '

The servant let me in, and then shut the door behind me. 'Sir Walter is in a meeting, sir. Perhaps you will wait. '

There was a telephone and one or two chairs in the hall, and I sat down there.

'Listen, 'I whispered to the servant. 'I'm in a bit of trouble, but I'm working for Sir Walter. If anyone comes to the door and asks for me, tell them I'm not here. '

There was a sudden ringing at the door, and he went to open it. He told them whose house it was, and that nobody could come in, and then shut the door.

* * *

A few minutes later there was another ring at the door, and the servant did not hesitate to let this visitor in. Everybody knew his face from the newspapers—as square, grey beard and bright blue eyes Lord Alloa, the First Sea Lord, and head of the British Navy.

He was shown into a room at the end of the hall. I sat there for twenty minutes. Surely the meeting would end soon; Royer must leave for Portsmouth by eleven o'clock.

Then the door opened again and the First Sea Lord came out. He walked past me, and in passing he looked at me and for a second I looked into his eyes. It was only for a second, but my heart jumped. The First Sea Lord had never seen me before, but in his eyes I saw that he recognized me. Then he passed me and was out of the door into the street.

I picked up the telephone book and looked up the number of Lord Alloa's house. I spoke to one of his servants.

'Is Lord Alloa at home? 'I asked.

'Yes, but he's ill and has been in bed all day. Do you want to leave a message, sir? '

I put down the telephone and sat down, shaking. My part in this business was not finished. I walked straight into the room where the others were meeting.

Sir Walter looked surprised and annoyed. 'I'm afraid that this is not a good time, Mr Hannay. '

'I think it is, 'I answered. 'Tell me, please, who left this room a minute ago. '

'Lord Alloa, 'said Sir Walter, looking angrier.

'It Was not, 'I cried. 'It looked like him but it was not him. It was a man who recognized me, who has seen me in the last month. I've just telephoned Lord Alloa's house and he's been ill in bed all day. '

'Who... 'someone asked.

'The Black Stone, 'I cried, sitting down, and looking at five frightened men.

8 黑石来了

第二天早晨我下楼吃早饭，看到瓦尔特爵士正在看密码信。看来他没有昨天那么怡然自得。

“您上床之后我又忙了一个小时。”他说。“我安排一个叫罗耶的法国人早一天来。他五点钟就到伦敦。但我觉得只变变日期没什么大用。如果敌人已知道他要来的话，他们就可能发现计划已经变了。要是知道他要来的消息是如何泄露出去的就好了。”

我一边吃，他一边说。他把这么多重要的秘密都告诉我，出人意料。

“海军的作战计划难道不能变一变吗？”我问道。

“可以的，”他说。“但是我们尽量不变。变起来相当困难，而且有些变化是做不到的。而最大的问题是他们不会在大街上偷这个计划。他们会设法神不知鬼不觉地搞到计划的细节，那样罗耶返回巴黎时还觉得一切仍然密不透风。”

“那么我们就必须帮助他直到他回去，”我说。

“饭后他会到我伦敦的家来见我们：还有海军的惠特克、我本人、亚瑟·德鲁爵士、温斯坦利将军。海军第一大臣，也就是海军的首脑，生病了，可能来不了。惠特克要把一些重要文件交给罗耶，然后用车把罗耶送到朴次茅斯，在那儿海军的船把他送回法国。一路上都会有人监护他。惠特克拿着文件在会见罗耶之前也有人监护。我们能做的就这么多我看不出能出什么纰漏。但是因为卡罗里德斯被杀，我觉得很没底。”

早饭后他叫我今天替他开车。

“您了解这是些什么人，所以我不想冒险。”

到伦敦我们首先去苏格兰场，在那儿见到一个相貌威严的警察。

“我给您带来了兰厄姆谋杀案的凶手。”瓦尔特爵士说。

那个警察笑了。“您要真带来就好了。我猜您是哈内先生。有那么几天我们对您很感兴趣。”

“哈内先生会让您重新感兴趣的，麦吉利夫雷。但他的故事要等二十四个小时再说。而我想让您告诉哈内先生说您不会逮捕他了。”

“当然不会逮捕了。”警察转身对我说：“您的寓所和仆人都等着您，可大概您不想回那去了。”

我和瓦尔特爵士离开那里，他告诉我这一天剩下的时间没我的事了。“哈内，明天请来看我。无需我说，一切要保守秘密。您最好别抛头露面。要是您那个黑石的朋友们看到您，恐怕就麻烦了。”

而我不知道干些什么。重作自由人我很不习惯。我进了一家上等餐馆去吃午饭，可仍然感到惴惴不安。每逢有人看我，我就疑心他们想到了那件谋杀案。我心事重重地围着伦

敦逛来逛去。我晓得罗耶现在已经在英格兰，而且肯定会发生什么骇人听闻的事件，而只有我才能制止。然而现在不关我的事了。

我不想回寓所。将来不回不行，而现在我决定今晚在旅馆里过夜。

我在另一家餐馆里吃晚饭，计划完事后就到瓦尔特爵士家去。他不一定希望我现在去，但是去了我会感到舒服一点。

我穿过伦敦去瓦尔特爵士的家，路上遇到一伙年轻人。其中有马默杜克·乔普利。

“杀人犯！”他喊道。“抓住他！他就是哈内，兰厄姆的凶手！”他抓住我的胳膊，其它人把我围起来。

我不想找麻烦，但心里直冒火。一个警察走过来，我没向他心平气和、入情入理地解释他们如何不对，而是扬手照着马默杜克那张蠢脸狠狠揍去。看到他仰面朝天地躺在路上，我心里痛快多了。然后就是乱打一气，直到警察把我抓住才住手。我听警察问是怎么回事，马默杜克含着一口碎牙，告诉警察我就是那个杀人凶手哈内。

我愤怒已极，一手推开警察，一手推开马默杜克一个同伙，然后撒腿就跑。人们在背后喊我，但到底给我逃掉了。我一路跑到瓦尔特爵士家，走到门口按门铃。我盼着门快点打开。

门很快开了。

“我必须见瓦尔特爵士，”我对仆人说，“有十分要紧的事。”

仆人放我进来，然后关上门。“先生，瓦尔特爵士正在开会。也许您要等一会儿。”

大厅里有一部电话，一两张椅子，于是我坐了下来。

“听着，”我小声对仆人说。“我遇到点麻烦，而我是为瓦尔特爵士干事的。如果有人来敲门找我，告诉他们我不在这儿。”

门上的铃突然响起来，他过去开门。告诉他们这是谁的家，并说不能入内，然后把门关上。

过了几分钟又响起了门铃，仆人爽快地放客人进来。人们在报纸上熟悉了他的面孔——四方脸、灰胡子、蓝眼睛炯炯有神。他就是阿罗勋爵，第一海军大臣，英国海军的首脑。

他被领进大厅一头的屋子里。我在那儿坐了二十分钟。会议肯定快完了；因为罗耶必须在十一点离开去朴次茅斯。

门又开了，第一海军大臣走出来。他走过我身边，顺便看了我一眼，同时我也盯着他的眼睛看了一下。就看了那么一下，我的心就剧跳起来。这位第一海军大臣以前根本没有见过我，但从他的眼神里我知道他已经认出了我。他从我身边走过，出了门走上大街。

我拿起电话簿，查阿罗勋爵家的电话号码。和他的仆人通话。

“阿罗勋爵在家吗？”我问道。

“在家，可是他病了，一整天躺在床上。先生，您要留口信吗？”

我放下电话，坐下来，浑身战栗。这出戏我扮演的角色还没有完。我闯进屋子，人们正在屋里开会。

看到我瓦尔特勋爵吃了一惊，样子很不高兴。“您这时候进来恐怕不大好吧，哈内先生。”

“我觉得好，”我答道。“请告诉我刚才离开屋的是谁。”

“阿罗勋爵，”瓦尔特爵士说，他脸上的怒色更重了。

“不是，”我喊道。“看着像他，但不是他。这个人认出我了，这个月他见过我。我刚才给阿罗勋爵家打了电话，他病了，一天没起床。”

“谁……”有人问。

“黑石，”我喊着，坐下来望着那五位吓得直呆呆的官员。

9 The thirty

9 The thirty-nine steps

Sir Walter got up and left the room. He came back after ten minutes. 'I've spoken to Alloa. I got him out of bed-he was very angry. He hasn't left his house all day.'

'It's impossible,' said Winstanley. 'I sat next to him for nearly half an hour.'

'That's what's so clever,' I said. 'You were too interested in other things to look at him closely. You knew that he might be well enough to come tonight and, as First Sea Lord, it was natural for him to be here. Why should you suspect that it wasn't him?'

Then the Frenchman spoke, very slowly, and in good English.

'This young man is right. He understands our enemies. People only see what they expect to see. This man came late, spoke little, and left early but he behaved exactly as we would expect Lord Alloa to behave.'

'But I don't understand,' said Winstanley. 'Our enemies don't want us to know what they have learnt about our war plans. But if one of us talked to Alloa about tonight's meeting, we would discover immediately that he hadn't been here.'

Sir Walter laughed angrily. 'That shows their cleverness again, in choosing Alloa. They took a risk, but everybody knows that Alloa is a sick man and is often too ill to go to meetings. And even when he is well, he is impatient, difficult, and a man of very few words. Which of us was likely to speak to him about tonight?'

'But the spy hasn't taken the plans,' said Winstanley. 'He saw them, but could he carry away pages of information in his head?'

'It's not difficult,' said the Frenchman. 'A good spy can remember things photographically.'

'Well, I suppose we'll have to change our plans,' said Sir Walter unhappily. 'There's another problem,' said Royer. 'I said a lot about the plans of the French army. That information will be very valuable to our enemies. That man, and his friends, must be stopped immediately.'

'They could simply send their information in a letter,' said Whittaker. 'It may already be in the post.'

'No,' said Rower. 'A spy brings home his information personally and he collects his pay personally. These men must cross the sea, so we still have a chance. You must watch the coast and search ships. It is desperately important for both France and Britain.'

Royer was right. We could do something. But none of us felt very hopeful. How, among the forty million people in Britain, could we find the three cleverest criminals in Europe?

* * *

Then, suddenly, I had an idea. 'Where is Scudder's book?' I asked Sir Walter. 'Quick, I remember something in it.'

He gave it to me.

I found the place. 'Thirty—nineteen steps,' I read, and again, 'Thirty—nineteen steps—I counted them—high tide, 10.17 p. m.'

Whittaker clearly thought I had gone mad.

'Don't you see it's a clue?' I cried. 'Scudder knew where they were going to leave England. Tomorrow was the day, and it's somewhere where high tide is at 10. 17.'

'Perhaps they've already gone tonight,' someone suggested.

'Not them. They have their own secret way, and why should they hurry? They don't know that we're after them. Where can I get a book of Tide Tables?'

Whittaker looked happier. 'It's a chance,' he said. 'Let's go to the Navy Offices.'

Sir Walter went off to Scotland Yard to get MacGillivray. The rest of us drove to the Navy Offices where we went to a big room full of books and maps. We got a copy of the Tide Tables, and I sat down and looked through it while the others watched.

It was no good. There were more than fifty places where high tide was at 10. 27. We needed more information than that.

I thought hard. What did Scudder mean by steps, and why was it so important to count them? It must be somewhere with several paths going down to the sea. This path would be the only one with thirty—nine steps.

I had another thought and checked the time of regular ships leaving England. There was no ship at 10. 17.

Why was high tide important? In a big harbour the tide doesn't matter. It is only important in a small harbour, or somewhere where there is no harbour at all.

Then I thought about where a man would leave England if he were going to Germany. Not from the south coast, or the west coast, or Scotland. It would be somewhere on the east coast, probably between Cromer and Dover.

I am not Sherlock Holmes. But I am used to using my head, and when I guess, my guesses are often right.

I wrote out my ideas on a piece of paper:

ALMOST CERTAIN

(1) A place where there are several paths down to the sea.

One of these has thirty—nine steps.

(2) High tide at 10. 17 p. m. A place where it is only possible for a ship to leave the coast at high tide.

(3) Probably not a harbour, but open coast with cliffs and a beach.

(4) Ship probably a small one, a yacht or a fishing boat.

(5) Somewhere on the east coast between Cromer and Dover.

It seemed strange to be sitting at a table, watched by a group of very important people, trying to understand something written by a dead man. But it was a matter of life or death to us.

Sir Walter and MacGillivray arrived. They had men watching all the harbours and railway stations with descriptions of the three men. But none of us thought that this would help. 'Here's the best I can do,' I said. 'We have to find a place where there is a path with thirty—nine steps down to a beach. It must be somewhere on the east coast. Of course, it's somewhere where high tide is at 10. 17 tomorrow night. Who can we ask who knows the east coast really well? '

Whittaker said he knew a man who lived in south London. Hewent off in a car to get him and came back at about one o'clock in the morningwith an old sailor who had worked all his life on the east coast.

'We want you to tell us about places you know on the eastcoast where there are cliffs and steps going down to the beach, 'saidWinstanley.

He thought for a minute or two. 'There are a lot of seasidetowns-holiday places-where there are steps from the town down to the beach. '

'No, that's notprivate enough, 'I said.

'Well, I don't know.Of course, there's the Ruff—'

'What's that? '

'It's in Kent, nearBradgate. There are cliffs with houses along the top-big houses. Some of thehouses have steps down to a beach Mostly rich people live there, thesort of people who like to be private.

I opened the Tide Tables at Bradgate. High tide was at 10.27 on the 15th of June.

'This looks hopeful, 'Icried. 'How can I find out when high tide is at the Ruff? '

'I can tell you that, sir, 'saidthe sailor. 'I used to go fishing there. High tide is ten minutes beforeBradgate. '

I closed the book and looked up at the others.

'If one of those paths has thirty—ninesteps, then I think we have a goodchance, 'I said. 'Can I take a car, Sir Walter, anda map? If Mr MacGillivray can help me, perhapswe can prepare something for tomorrow. '

It seemed strange for me to take control like this. But Iwas used to action, and they could seeit. It was the Frenchman, Royer, whosaid what they were all thinking. 'I am quite happy, 'hesaid, 'to leave this business in MrHannay's hands. '

At half-past three in the morning I was driving throughKent in the moonlight, with MacGillivraynext to me.

9 三十九级台阶

瓦尔特爵士站起身走出房间。十分钟后又回来了。“我和阿罗通过话了。我把他叫下床——他火了。一整天他没离开过房间。”

“那不可能，”温斯坦利说。“我在他旁边坐了差不多半个小时。”

“这就是所谓聪明，”我说。“你们的兴趣太专注在其它事情上了，而没有仔细看他。你们知道他的身体也许允许他今晚来开会，而且作为第一海军大臣来这里也是合情

合理的。你们有什么理由怀疑不是他呢？”

后来那个法国人开口了，他说得很慢但英语讲得很好。

“这个年轻人说得对。他了解敌人。人们只能看到他们期待看到的东西。这个人来得晚、说得少、走得早——他的言行举止和我们想像的阿罗勋爵一模一样。”

“可我不明白，”温斯坦利说。“敌人不想让我们知道他们已经获悉我们的作战计划。但要是我们有谁向阿罗谈起今晚会议的事，我们立刻就会发现他没来这里。”

瓦尔特爵士冷笑着。“这再次说明他们选中阿罗是他们的聪明之处。他们确实在铤而走险，可人们都知道阿罗有病，而且常常病得不能出席会议。即便他好的时候，他也没有耐心、难打交道、很少说话。我们谁会向他提今天晚上的事呢？”

“可是间谍还没有拿到计划呀，”温斯坦利说。“他见到了计划，可是他能把一页页的情报放在脑袋里装走吗？”

“那并不难，”法国人说。“好间谍记东西和照相一样。”

“我想我们必须改变计划，”瓦尔特爵士悻悻地说。

“还有一个问题，”罗耶说。“关于法军的计划我谈了很多。这些情报对敌人非常有用。得马上制止这个人和他同伙的行动。”

“他们仅仅写封信就可以把情报送出去，”惠特克说。“说不定现在已经在邮局了。”

“不会的，”罗耶说。“间谍都是亲自带着情报，也亲自领取报酬。这伙人一定会从海上走，我们还有一次机会。你们要监视海岸，搜查船只。这件事对法国和英国都至关重要。”

罗耶说得很对。我们还有所作为。但都觉得希望不大。英国有四千万人口，怎么才能找到那三个欧洲最机智过人的罪犯呢？”

后来，我突然想出个主意来。

“斯卡德尔的小本在哪儿？”我问瓦尔特爵士。“快点，我记得里边有点什么。”

他把小本递给我。

我找到那一页。“三十九级台阶，”我念着，接着又念下去，“三十九级台阶——我数过——涨潮，下午十点十七分。”

惠特克显然认为我疯了。

“您没看到这是一条线索吗？”我大声说。“斯卡德尔知道他们会在那儿出发离开英格兰。就在明天，那个地方十点十七分涨潮。”

“说不定他们今天晚上已经走了。”有人提醒说。

“他们不会。他们有自己的一套秘密方式，他们急什么？而且并不知道我们在跟踪。哪儿能搞到一本潮汐表？”

惠特克显得振作起来。“这是个机会，”他说。“我们到海军部去。”

瓦尔特爵士去苏格兰场找麦吉里夫雷。其他人驱车前去海军部，我们到了一间大屋子，屋子满是书和地图。找到一本潮汐表，我坐下来一页页地翻，而其他人则在旁边看着。

没用。有五十多处涨潮时间是十点十七分。仅这一点不够，我们需要知道得多些。

我苦思冥想。斯卡德尔说的台阶是什么意思，为什么数台阶那么重要？一定有个地方有几条路通往海边。唯有这条路有三十九级台阶。

我又想出一个主意，于是核对从英格兰出发的班船时间。可是没有十点十七分的班船。

为什么涨潮那么重要？在大港口潮汐并不重要。只有小港口，或者根本没有港口的地方才重要。

接着我考虑如果有人要去德国，他会在英格兰什么地方离岸。不会从南岸，或者西岸，或者从苏格兰离岸。而可能是东岸某处，也许在克罗默和多佛之间。

我并非歇洛克·福尔摩斯。但我好动脑筋，并且推测起来，往往都是对的。

我把想法写在一张纸上。

几乎肯定

- 1.有个地方有几条路通往海边。其中一条有三十九级台阶。
- 2.涨潮时间是晚上十点十七分。某处，船只只有在涨潮时才能离岸。
- 3.多半不是港口，而是有海滩和峭壁的开阔海岸。
- 4.大概是条小船，游艇或者渔船。
- 5.在东岸克罗默和多佛之间的某处。

我坐在桌旁写字，一群大人物注目旁观，极力想搞明白一个死人写的是什么东西，这情景很古怪。然而对我们来说这是生死攸关的大事。

瓦尔特爵士和麦吉里夫雷来了。他们已经派人根据那三个人的相貌特征监视所有的港口和车站。没人认为会有什么用。

“我已尽力而为了，”我说。“我们必须找到一处，那里有三十九级台阶通往海边。还必须在东海岸。当然，这个地方明天晚上的涨潮时间是十点十七分。找谁问哪个人非常熟悉东岸？”

惠特克说他认识一个住伦敦南部的人。他开车去找他，大约凌晨一点回来了，带着个老海员，这个人在东海岸干了一辈子。

“我们想请您说说在东海岸哪些地方有峭壁和通往海滩的台阶。”温斯坦利说。

他思考了一两分钟。“海边有许多村镇——度假地——那里都有台阶通往海滩。”

“不，那不够隐秘，”我说。

“那我就知道了。当然，有个叫拉福的——”

“什么？”

“在肯特，离布拉盖特很近。那有峭壁，房子建在峭壁顶上——都是大房子。一些房子有台阶通往海滩。多数是富人住在那里，就是那些喜欢隐秘的主儿们。”

我打开布拉盖特的潮汐表。六月十五日那里的涨潮时间是十点二十七分。

“看来有希望，”我叫了起来。“怎么找出拉福的涨潮时间？”

“先生，这我可以告诉您，”那个海员说。“过去我常常到那里钓鱼。涨潮时间比布拉盖特早十分钟。”

我合上书，抬起头看着其他人。

“如果有一条路是三十九级台阶的话，那么我想我们就有胜算了，”我说。“瓦尔特爵士，能给我辆车和一张地图吗？如果麦吉里夫雷先生能帮忙的话，也许可以为明天做些准备。”

我这样指挥大家好像不伦不类。但本人敢做敢为，他们也可以看得出来。还是那个法国人罗耶说出了大家的心里话。他说：“我很高兴把这件事交给哈内先生去办。”

凌晨三点半我驱车在月色中穿过肯特，麦吉里夫雷就坐在我身边。

10 Meetings by the sea

10 Meetings by the sea

It was a fine, blue June morning, and I was outside a hotel in Bradgate looking out to sea. There was a ship out there, and I could see that it was a warship of some kind. Mac Gillivray had been in the navy and knew the ship. I sent a message to Sir Walter to ask if it could help us if necessary.

After breakfast we walked along the beach under the Ruff. I kept hidden, while Mac Gillivray counted the six lots of steps in the cliff.

I waited for an hour while he counted, and when I saw him coming towards me with a piece of paper, I was very nervous.

He read out the numbers. 'Thirty-four, thirty-five, thirtynine, forty-two, forty-seven, andtwenty-one. 'I almost got up and shouted.

We walked back to Bradgate quickly. MacGillivray had sixpolicemen sent down from London. He then went off to look at the house at the top of the thirty-nine steps.

The information he brought back was neither good nor bad.

The house was called Trafalgar House, and belonged to an old man called Appleton. He was there at the moment. The neighbours didn't know him well. MacGillivray had then gone to the back door of the house, pretending to be a man selling sewing machines. There were three servants, and he spoke to the cook. He was sure she knew nothing. Next door a new house was being built, which might be a good place to watch from; and on the other side the house was empty. Its garden was rather wild, and would also be a good place to hide in.

I took a telescope and found a good hiding place from which to watch the house. I watched for a time, and saw an old man leave the house and walk into the back garden at the top of the cliff. He sat down to read a newspaper, but he looked out to sea several times. I thought he was probably looking at the warship I watched him for half an hour, until he went back into the house for lunch. Then I went back to the hotel for mine.

I wasn't feeling very confident. That old man might be the old man I had met in the farmhouse on the moors. But there are hundreds of old men in houses by the sea, and he was probably just a nice old man on his holidays.

After lunch I sat in front of the hotel and looked out to sea; and then I felt happier, because I saw something new. A yacht came up the coast and stopped a few hundred metres off the Ruff MacGillivray and I went down to the harbour, got a boat, and spent the afternoon fishing.

We caught quite a lot of fish, and then, at about four o'clock, went to look at the yacht. It looked like a fast boat and its name was the Ariadne. I spoke to a sailor who was cleaning the side of the boat, and he was certainly English. So was the next sailor we spoke to, and we had quite a long conversation about the weather.

Then, suddenly, the men stopped talking and started work again, and a man in uniform walked up. He was a pleasant, friendly man, and asked us about the fishing in very good English. But I was sure that he was not English himself.

I felt a little more confident after seeing him, but as we went back to Bradgate, I was still not sure. My enemies had killed Scudder because they thought he was a danger to them. They had tried to kill me for the same reason. So why hadn't they changed their escape plans? They didn't know about Scudder's black notebook, but why stay with the same plan when there was a chance that I knew about it? It seemed a stupid risk to take.

I decided to spend an hour or two watching Trafalgar House and found a good place where I could look down on the garden. I could see two women playing tennis. One was the old man I had already seen; the other was a younger, fatter man. They played well, and were clearly enjoying themselves like two businessmen on holiday. I have never seen anything more harmless. They stopped for a drink, and I asked myself if I wasn't the most stupid man alive. These were two normal, boring Englishmen, not the clever murderers that I had met in Scotland.

Then a third man arrived on a bicycle. He walked into the garden and started talking to the tennis players. They were all laughing in a very English way. Soon they went back into the house, laughing and talking, and I stayed there feeling stupid.

These men might be acting, but why? They didn't know I was watching and listening to them. They were just three perfectly normal, harmless Englishmen.

* * *

But there were three of them: and one was old, and one was fat, and one was thin and dark. And a yacht was waiting a kilometre away with at least one German on it. I thought about Karolides lying dead, and all Europe trembling on the edge of war, and about the men waiting in London, hoping that I would do something to stop these spies.

I decided there was only one thing to do. I had to continue and just hope for the best. I didn't want to do it. I would rather walk into a room full of wild animals than walk into that happy English house and tell those three men they were under arrest. How they would laugh at me!

Then I remembered something that an old friend in Africa once told me. He had often been in trouble with the police. He once talked about disguises with me, and he said that the way somebody looked was not the real secret. He said that what mattered was the 'feel' of somebody. If you moved to completely different surroundings, and if you looked comfortable and at home there, you would be very difficult to recognize. My friend had once borrowed a black coat and tie and gone to church and stood next to the policeman who was looking for him. The policeman had only seen him shooting out the lights in a pub, and he did not recognize him in a church.

Perhaps these people were playing the same game. A stupid man tries to look different; a clever man looks the same and is different.

My friend had also told me this: 'If you want to disguise yourself, you must believe that you're the person you're pretending to be.' That would explain the game of tennis. These men weren't acting; they just changed from one life to another, and the new life was as natural as the old. It is the secret of all great criminals.

It was now about eight o'clock. I went back to see MacGillivray and we arranged

where the other policeman would hide. After that I went for a walk along the coast, looking at the peaceful people on holiday. Out at sea I could see lights on the *Ariadne*, and on the warship, and, further away, the lights of other ships. Everything seemed so normal and peaceful that I couldn't believe the three men were my criminals. But I turned and walked towards Trafalgar House at about half past nine.

MacGillivray's men were, I supposed, in their hiding places. The house was quiet, but I could just hear the sound of voices; the men were just finishing their dinner. Feeling very stupid, I walked up to the door and rang the bell.

When a servant opened the door, I asked for Mr Appleton and was shown in. I had planned to walk straight in and surprise the men into recognizing me. But I started looking at all the pictures on the wall. There were photographs of groups of English schoolboys and lots of other things that you only find in an English home. The servant walked in front of me into the dining-room and told the men who I was, and I missed the chance of surprise.

When I walked in, the old man stood up and turned round to meet me. The other two turned to look at me. The old man was perfectly polite.

'Mr Hannay?' he said. 'Did you wish to see me?'

I pulled up a chair and sat down.

'I think we've met before,' I said, 'and I guess you know why I'm here.'

The light in the room was not bright, but I think they all looked very surprised.

'Perhaps, perhaps,' said the old man. 'I'm afraid I don't remember faces very well. You'll have to tell me why you're here, because I really don't know.'

'Well,' I said, 'although I didn't really believe what I was saying, I have come to arrest all three of you.'

'Arrest!' said the old man in surprise. 'Arrest! What for?'

'For the murder of Franklin Scudder in London on the 23rd of May.'

'I've never heard the name before,' said the old man.

One of the others spoke. 'That was the Langham Place murder. I read about that in the newspapers. But you must be mad! Where do you come from?'

'Scotland Yard,' I said.

Then there was silence for a moment until the fat one started to talk, hesitating a lot between words.

'Don't worry, uncle. It's all a stupid mistake. Even the police make mistakes. I wasn't even in England on the 23rd, and Bob was in hospital. You were in London, but you can explain what you were doing.'

'You're right, Percy, it's easy. The 23rd! That was the day after Agatha's wedding. Yes, I had lunch with Charlie Symons and in the evening I went to the Cardwells'. Why, they gave me that! 'He pointed to a cigar box on the table.

'I think you will see that you have made a mistake, 'the thin dark man said to me politely. 'We are quite happy to help Scotland Yard, and we don't want the police to make stupid mistakes. That's so, isn't it, uncle? '

'Certainly, Bob. 'The old man looked happier now. 'Certainly we'll help if we can. But this is madness. ' 'This will make our friends laugh, 'said the fat man. 'They think we're boring and that nothing ever happens to us. He began to laugh very pleasantly.

'Yes, it's a good story. Really, Mr Hannay, I should be angry, but it's too funny. You really frightened me! You looked too serious. I thought I'd killed somebody in my sleep! '

They weren't acting. There was nothing false about them. At first I wanted to apologize and leave. Then I stood up and went to the door and turned on the main light. I looked at the three faces.

I saw nothing to help me. One was old and bald, one was fat, one was dark and thin. They could be the three men I had seen in Scotland, but I could see nothing to prove it.

'Well, 'said the old man politely, 'are you sure now that we are not murderers, or are you going to take us to the police station? '

There was nothing to do except call in the men outside and arrest them, or say I had made a mistake and leave. And I couldn't decide.

'While we're waiting, let's have a game of cards, 'said the fat one. 'It will give Mr Hannay time to think, and we need a fourth player. Will you play? '

I agreed, but everything suddenly seemed unreal. We went into another room, where there was a table and cards. The window was open and the moon was shining on the cliffs and the sea. We played and they talked. I'm usually quite good at cards, but that night I played extremely badly.

* * *

Then something woke me up.

The old man put his cards down for a moment and sat back in his chair with his hand

on his knee. It was a movement I had seen before, in that farm on the moors, with two servants with guns behind me. Suddenly my head cleared and I looked at the three men differently.

It was ten o'clock.

The three faces seemed to change in front of my eyes. The thin dark man was the murderer. His knife had killed Scudder. The fat man had been the First Sea Lord last night.

But the old man was the worst. How had I ever thought he looked kind and friendly? His eyes were cold and evil and frightening. I went on playing, but I hated him more and more with every card.

'Look at the time, Bob,' said the old man. 'Don't forget you've got a train to catch. He must be in London tonight,' he said, turning to me. His voice now sounded completely false.

'I'm afraid he must wait,' I said.

'Oh, no!' said the thin man. 'I thought you'd finished with that. I must go. You can have my address.'

'No,' I said, 'you must stay.'

I think then they realized they were in real trouble. I looked at the old man and I saw his eyes hood like a hawk.

I blew my whistle.

Immediately the lights went out. Someone held me to my chair.

'Quickly, Franz,' somebody shouted in German, 'the boat, the boat!' I saw two policemen on the grass behind the house.

The thin dark man jumped through the window and was across the grass before anybody could stop him. I was fighting the old man, and more police came into the room. I saw them holding the fat man. But the thin man was at the top of the steps. I waited, holding the old man, for the time it would take the thin man to get to the sea.

Suddenly, the old man escaped from me and ran to the wall of the room. From underneath the ground I heard an explosion. The cliff and the steps had been blown up.

The old man looked at me with wild, crazy eyes.

'He is safe,' he cried. 'You cannot follow him. The Black Stone has won.'

This old man was more than just a paid spy. Those hooded eyes shone with a deep, burning love for his country. But as the police took him away, I had one more

thing to say.

'Your friend has not won. We put our men on the Ariadne an hour ago.'

Seven weeks later, as all the world knows, we went to war. I joined the army in the first week. But I did my best work, I think, before I put on uniform.

10 海边相遇

六月的清晨天空一碧如洗，我站在布拉盖特一家旅馆外面眺望着大海。海上有一艘船，看得出来是某种军舰。麦吉里夫雷当过海军知道是什么军舰。我给瓦尔特爵士送了个信，问必要时这艘军舰能否帮助我们。

早饭后我们在拉福下面的海滩上散步。麦吉里夫雷数着峭壁上的六条台阶，而我则始终隐蔽着。

他数台阶让我等了一个小时，看到他手里拿着一张纸向我走来时，我感到忐忑不安。

他念数字：“三十四、三十五、三十九、四十二、四十七、二十一。”我差点跳起来狂喊。

我们马上回布拉盖特。麦吉里夫雷从伦敦调来了六个警察。然后他离开去看那三十九级台阶顶上的房子。

他带回来的消息不好也不坏。那所房子叫特拉法尔加别墅，主人是个叫阿普尔顿的老人。此时他就在那里。左邻右舍都不太认识他。麦吉里夫雷当时已到了房子的后门，装作缝纫机推销员。那里有三个仆人，他找厨师讲话。他搞确实了那女厨师一无所知。邻家正在建造新房，那是瞭望的绝好地方；房子的另一边是一片空地。房子的庭院相当荒芜，但是个藏身的理想之处。

我拿着一架望远镜，找了个隐蔽的好地方，从那里监视那所房子。望了一会儿，看到一个老头离开房子走进峭壁顶上的后庭院。他坐下来读报，但时不时向大海张望。我想他在看那艘军舰。我观察了他半个小时，直到他回房去吃午饭。后来我也回旅馆吃午饭了。

我感到心里没底。这个老头有可能是我在荒原的农舍里见过的那个。可是海边住着数百个老人，他也有可能不过是正在度假的一位慈祥老者而已。

午饭后我坐在旅馆前看着大海；后来我看到了一样以前没见过的东西，我感到来了精神。一艘快艇向岸边驶来，停在离拉福数百米的地方。我和麦吉里夫雷赶到港口，搞了一只船，整个下午都在那儿钓鱼。

我们钓到不少鱼，后来，大约四点钟，我们过去看那艘快艇。看起来像是一艘摩托艇，船名叫阿里亚德妮。水手正在洗船，我过去和他攀谈，他肯定是英国人。我们又如此这般地和另一个水手谈起来，就天气说了一大堆。

后来这两个人突然闭口，又开始干起活来，一个穿制服的人走了过来。他讨人喜欢，态度友好，向我们打听钓鱼的事，说一口漂亮的英语。但我肯定他本人不是英国人。

看到他以后我心里有点信心了，但回到布拉盖特后仍然感到没把握。敌人杀斯卡德尔因为他们认为他对他们构成了威胁。出于同样的理由他们也要杀我。那么为什么他们不改变逃跑计划呢？他们不了解斯卡德尔黑笔记本里的内容，但是我可能知道，既然有这种可能，为什么还坚持原计划呢？冒这种险显得太愚蠢了。

我决定花一两个小时监视特拉法尔加别墅，找到一处地方，从那可以俯视庭院。我看到两个人正在打网球。一个是那个老头，我已经见过；另一个比较年轻，胖一点。他们玩得很好，显得非常开心，俨然是两个度假的商人。他们看起来再于人无害不过了。他们停手喝点水，我暗自问道自己是不是活着的天字第一号笨蛋。这不过是两个平平常常的、没劲的英国人，哪里是我在苏格兰遇到的精明的杀人凶手。

后来第三个人骑着自行车过来了。他走进庭院和玩网球的两个说起话来。他们大笑着样子非常像英国人。一回儿，他们又说又笑地回房去了，我呆在那儿，觉得傻乎乎的。这些人可能在做戏，但为什么？他们并不知道我在监视、偷听他们。他们只不过是几个平凡不过、于人无伤的英国人罢了。

这里一共三个人：一个上年纪的，一个胖点的，另一个瘦而黑的。游艇就等在一公里之外，上面至少有一个德国人。我想到卡罗里德斯横尸在地，全欧洲在战争边缘上战栗，想到伦敦的人们还等着，希望我有所作为以制止这些间谍活动。

我认为能做的只有一件。我必须坚持下去并怀着很大的希望。我不想那么做。我宁可走进满是野兽的屋子也不愿去那座喜气洋洋的英国人的房子，对那三个人说他们被捕了。他们会怎么笑话我！

我想起在非洲时一个老朋友给我讲过一件事。过去他常和警察闹矛盾。有一次他和我谈起伪装的事来，他说一个人表面如何并不是真正的秘密。他还说重要的是那个人给人的感觉。如果你到一个完全陌生的环境，而你看起来泰然自若像在家一样，那人们就很难认出你。我那个朋友曾经借了一件黑大衣和一条领带，穿戴起来，上了教堂，就站在正要抓他的警察旁边。这位警察过去只见过他在小酒店如何拿枪打灯泡，而在教堂却认不出他来。

也许这些人玩的正是这一套把戏。愚蠢的人总想显得与众不同；聪明人看上去无异于常人，却实际与众不同。

我朋友还告诉我：“如果你想掩饰自己，就得确信你就是你所装扮的角色。”他们打网球就说明了这点。这些人并不是在做戏，不过是从一种生活转变为另一种生活，而新生活过得和旧生活一样自然。这就是所有大罪犯的诀窍。

现在是八点左右。我回去找麦吉里夫雷，安排其他警察在何处隐蔽。完事之后我沿海边散步，看着人们安定地度假。我可以看到海上阿里亚德妮的灯光，还可以看到那艘军舰的以及更远处其它船只的灯光。一切看着那么正常和平静，我简直不能相信那三个人是罪犯。九点半左右，我转身回特拉法格别墅。

我估计麦吉里夫雷的人已经进入隐蔽位置。别墅一派宁静，只能听见人们说话的声音；他们刚刚吃完饭。我觉得自己笨头笨脑的，走到门口，按响了门铃。

仆人开了门，我求见阿普尔顿先生，于是被请进去。我原打算径直闯进去使这些人出乎意料从而露出本来就认得我的真相。但进了屋我就开始看着墙上那些照片。那是些小学生的照片以及许多其它只有在英国人家里才能见到的陈设。那个仆人走在我前面进了餐厅，向餐厅里的人介绍我，这样一来，就失去了吓他们一跳的机会。

我一进来老头就站起来转过身迎接我。另外两个则扭过头看我。老人家彬彬有礼。

“哈内先生吗？”他说。“您要找我吗？”

我拉过一把椅子坐下来。

“我想我们以前见过，”我说。“而且我猜您也知道我为什么到这儿来。”

屋里的灯光虽然不亮，但我想还看得出所有的人都很吃惊。

“也许，也许，”老头说。“恐怕我记人的本领不怎么样。我确实不知道您为什么到这儿来，您只好告诉我了。”

“行，”我说，对我说的自己也不大有把握，“我到这儿来逮捕你们三个。”

“逮捕！”老头惊讶地说。“逮捕！为什么？”

“因为五月二十三号伦敦的富兰克林·斯卡德尔谋杀案。”

“我以前从未听说过这个名字。”老头说。

另外一个开口了。“就是兰厄姆谋杀案。我在报纸上读到过。您肯定是疯了。您是哪来的？”

“苏格兰场，”我说。

然后是短暂的寂静，接着那个胖子开始说话，话语间吞吞吐吐。

“叔叔，别担心。这完全是个愚蠢的错误。警察也会闹错的。二十三号我不在英格兰鲍勃在住院。您在伦敦，可是您能解释清楚您那时正干什么。”

“珀西，你说的不错，这很容易。二十三号！那是阿加莎举行婚礼的第二天。对，我和查理·西蒙斯一起吃的午饭，晚上去卡德韦尔家了。真是的，这就是他们给的！”他指着桌子上的雪茄盒子。

“我想您会明白是您搞错了。”那个黑而瘦的人客客气气地说。“我们很高兴帮苏格兰场的忙，而且也不想让警察犯愚蠢的错误。叔叔，是不是？”

“当然是，鲍勃。”老头看上去来精神了。

“当然了，能帮上忙我们会帮的。可是现在这种做法是太过份了。”

“这会博得朋友们一笑的。他们总觉得我们乏味，生活没有一点风波。”说着他开心地笑了。

“对，这是个不错的故事。哈内先生，说实话，我本该生气，但这事太可笑了。您确实吓了我一跳！看上去那么一本正经。我还以为睡觉的时候把什么人给杀了呢！”

他们没有做戏。也没有漏洞。我第一个想法是道歉，然后走人。后来我站起来走到门口把大灯打开。看着这三个人的面孔。

看不出什么有用的线索。一个又老又秃，一个胖，一个瘦而黑。可能是在苏格兰见到的那三个，但是找不出证据来。

“我说，”老头彬彬有礼地说。“现在您是否相信我们不是杀人犯，或者还要把我们带到警察局去？”

我现在要么把外边的人叫进来把他们逮捕，要么承认说我错了，然后离开，除此无法可想。但我一时下不了决心。

“我们一边等着一边玩牌吧。”那个胖子说。“给哈内先生点时间想想，我们三缺一您玩吗？”

我答应玩，而这一切转眼之间似乎变得似是而非了。我们到另一间屋，屋里有张桌子，有牌。窗户开着，月光闪烁在峭壁和海面上。我们玩着牌，他们说着话。平时我牌玩得相当不错，可那天晚上打得糟透了。

后来有件事使我警醒过来。

老头把牌放下，呆了一会儿，仰身靠着椅背，把手放在膝盖上。这个动作我以前见过，在荒原的农舍里，被两个仆人在背后拿枪逼着。突然间我的头脑清醒起来，再看这三位就大不相同了。

十点整。

这三张面孔在眼前似乎变了样。那个瘦而黑的就是杀人凶手。他用刀杀了斯卡德尔。那个胖子是昨天晚上装第一海军大臣的人。

而最坏的是那个老头。刚才我怎么会认为他看着挺和气、友好呢？他那双眼睛阴森、邪恶、恐怖。我继续打着牌，但是每打一张牌对他的憎恨就增加一分。

“看着点时间，鲍勃，”老头说。“别忘了你得赶火车。今天晚上他必须到伦敦。”他说着转过脸来对着我。他的声音这会儿听起来全然是装腔作势。

“恐怕他得留下来。”我说。

“啊，那不行！”那个瘦子说。“我以为这事已经完了。我必须得走。我可以给您留下地址。”

“不行，”我说。“您必须留下。”

我觉得此时他们已觉察到真的遇到麻烦了。看着那个老头，他的眼睛像猫头鹰似地眯起来。

我吹起了口哨。

所有的灯突然熄灭。有人把我按在椅子上。

“快点，弗朗茨，”是谁用德语喊，“船！船！”我看到房子后面的草地上有两个警察。

那个黑而瘦的人乘着没人来得及挡他，从窗户跳出去，跑过草地。我正在与老头搏斗时，警察纷纷冲进屋来。看见他们擒住了那个胖子。但瘦子已经跑到台阶沿上。我手里抓着老头，等着瘦子跑到海边。

突然老头从我手里脱身而出，向墙壁冲去。一声爆炸从地下响起。峭壁和台阶统统飞了上天。

老头看着我，眼光里闪着野蛮和疯狂。

“他没事，”他大喊。“你抓不住他。黑石赢定了。”

这个老头不是仅仅为钱而作间谍的。那双眯缝的眼睛闪烁着对他的国家深沉而热烈的爱。警察要带他走的时候，我又说了一句话。

“您的朋友没赢。一小时前我们已经把人布置在阿里亚德妮上了。”

正如众所周知，七周以后，我们参战了。开战第一个星期我就参了军。然而我觉得在没穿军装之前我就已经取得自己的最佳战绩了。