

# Margot | Hubbard | Tony | Max

MARGOT. (Suddenly, turning to Tony.) Tony, I know what I was going to ask you. Why did you phone me last night? (All turn on Tony.)

HUBBARD. (Crossing to Tony.) Now, just a moment. Before I lose the thread of this. At about twenty to eleven you left your party to phone your boss?

TONY. Yes. I used the pay phone in the lobby.

HUBBARD. Now, how long were you on the phone to your boss before you called your wife?

TONY. As a matter of fact I never did speak to him. I couldn't remember his number—so I rang my wife to ask her to look it up in the address book on the desk.

MARGOT. You mean you hauled me out of bed just to give you his phone number?

TONY. I had to. (To Hubbard.) My boss was flying to Brussels this morning and I wanted to remind him of something. It was rather important.

HUBBARD. Wasn't there a telephone directory in the hotel?

TONY. (Calmly.) Yes, but he was at home—his home number isn't listed.

HUBBARD. So you never called him, after all?

TONY. No. Naturally when I heard what had happened here—I forgot all about it.

HUBBARD. I see. (To Max.) Mr. Halliday, Mr. and Mrs. Wendice are coming to my office now to make their statements. (Taking out notebook.) Would you give me your address, sir? I may want to get in touch with you. (Tony goes out by hall door.)

MAX. Certainly.

MARGOT. I'll get my coat. (She exits into bedroom.)

MAX. I'm staying at the Carfax Hotel. . . .

HUBBARD. (Handing Max notebook and pencil.) Just write it down there, will you? Telephone number as well. (Watching Max write.) Ever been over here before, sir? (Max doesn't see the catch in this.)

MAX. (Writing.) Yes, about a year ago.

HUBBARD. Umhm. (Max hands notebook to Hubbard who glances at address and returns it to his pocket. Tony enters by hall door.)

TONY. Inspector, there's a devil of a crowd outside. Can't you send them away?

HUBBARD. They'll come back faster than they go, sir. I was going to suggest we left by the garden. Isn't there a gate at the far end? TONY. Yes, but it may still be locked. I'll just see. (Tony unlocks window and exits into garden. Hubbard waits till he has gone and then turns to Max.)

HUBBARD. (Confidentially.) How much does he know—about you and Mrs. Wendice?

MAX. (Startled.) What are you talking about?

HUBBARD. You wrote a letter to Mrs. Wendice—from New York. (Max only stares at Hubbard.) It was found in the dead man's inside pocket. I didn't mention it because I wasn't sure how much Mr. Wendice knew. Have you any idea how it got there?

MAX. No. (Margot enters from bedroom. She is wearing an overcoat and carries her handbag.)

MARGOT. Where's Tony?

MAX. He's just gone into the garden.

HUBBARD. Mrs. Wendice. When you lost your handbag, did you lose a letter as well? (Margot looks quickly at Max.)

MARGOT. No.

MAX. Margot, it was found in this man's pocket.

HUBBARD. You did lose it—didn't you? (Pause.)

MARGOT. Yes, I did.

HUBBARD. I asked you that before, didn't I?

MARGOT. Yes—but you see—my husband didn't know about it.

HUBBARD. This man was blackmailing you, wasn't he? (No reply.)

MAX. It's no good, Margot. Tony will have to know about it now.

(Max takes out his wallet. Margot stares at him horrified.)

MARGOT. No!

MAX. It's the only thing to do. Inspector, after Mrs. Wendice lost my letter she received these two notes. (Max hands the two blackmail notes to Hubbard who reads them.)

HUBBARD. (Glancing at postmarks.) Last February. (To Margot.) How many times have you seen this man?

MARGOT. (Angrily.) I've never seen him.

HUBBARD. (To Max, briskly.) Mr. Halliday, I'd like you to come along with us.

MAX. Yes, of course.

HUBBARD. Mrs. Wendice, when you come to make your statement there may be other police officers present. I shall warn you

first that anything you say will be taken down and may be used in evidence. Now, never mind what you've told me so far. We'll forget all about that. From now on tell us exactly what you know about this man and exactly what happened last night. If you try and conceal anything at all it may put you in a very serious position.

MARGOT. I wish you'd explain what you mean by all this.

HUBBARD. I will. You admit that you killed this man. (*Tony enters quietly from garden and stands listening.*) You say you did it in self-defense. Unfortunately, there were no witnesses, so we've only your word for that.

TONY. But I heard it all—over the telephone, Inspector.

HUBBARD. (*Turning to Tony.*) What exactly did you hear, Mr. Wendice?

TONY. I heard—well, I heard a thud and . . .

HUBBARD. Did you hear anything to indicate that a struggle was going on?

TONY. Well, what I heard was perfectly consistent with what my wife told me.

HUBBARD. So all you really know of the matter is what your wife told you, isn't it? (*To Margot.*) You suggest that this man came to burgle your flat, but there's no evidence of that. There is evidence, however, that he was blackmailing you.

TONY. Blackmail?

MAX. It's true, Tony.

HUBBARD. You suggest that he came in by the window—and we know he came in by that door.

MARGOT. (*Frantically.*) But he can't have got in that way. That door was locked and there are only two keys. (*Tumbling in her handbag.*) My husband had his with him and mine was in my handbag. . . . (*Takes out her latchkey and holds it up.*) Here! (*There is a pause.*)

HUBBARD. (*Quietly.*) You could have let him in. (*Pause.*)

TONY. You're not suggesting that she let him in herself?

HUBBARD. At present, that appears to be the only way he could have entered.

MARGOT. Don't you even believe I was attacked? (*Puts her hand to her throat.*) How do you think I got these bruises on my throat?

HUBBARD. You could have caused those bruises yourself. A silk

stocking was found outside the window. It had two knots tied in it. Does that mean anything to you?

MARGOT. I suppose that must have been the stocking he used. (*Pause.*)

HUBBARD. We found the twin stocking wrapped in newspaper at the bottom of the wastepaper basket. Can you explain why your attacker should do that?

MARGOT. No.

HUBBARD. Those stockings were yours, weren't they?

MARGOT. (*Horrified.*) No!

HUBBARD. We know they were. One of the heels had been darned with some silk that didn't quite match. We found a reel of that silk in your mending basket. (*Margot rushes to mending basket and searches inside.*)

MARGOT. (*Thoroughly frightened.*) Tony, there was a pair of stockings in here. (*Tony goes to desk, picks up phone and dials frantically.*)

TONY. (*As he dials.*) I've heard of police deliberately planting clues to make sure of a conviction. I just didn't realize they did it in this country.

MARGOT. (*Running across to Tony.*) His men were in here for hours last night. They could easily have taken those stockings out and done anything with them.

TONY. Of course they did. And they wiped his shoes on the door mat as well. (*Margot turns to Max.*)

ROGER. (*Offstage, heard through receiver.*) Huilo.

TONY. (*Into phone.*) Huilo, Roger. Tony Wendice, here. Now listen, Roger—we had a burglary last night. And Margot was attacked.

ROGER. Margot! Was she hurt?

TONY. No, she's all right, but the man was killed. The police are here now. And don't laugh—but they're suggesting that Margot killed him intentionally. . . .

HUBBARD. (*Interrupting.*) I wouldn't say that if I were you.

ROGER. Well! That's a good one!

TONY. It's funny, isn't it? Now, can you come round at once? To the Maida Vale Police Station. . . .

ROGER. Be there right away.

TONY. Thanks, old boy. Good-bye. (*Tony rings off and crosses to*