

Murder at the Manor

The moon looked down as a silver fox thieved its way across the snow covered grounds of Hawthorn Manor and hid in the shadows of Timperley Wood. A slight wind ruffled the feathers of the crows that were now roosting high in the trees.

Only the sharp scream of a woman broke the silence – the crows cawing like an old hag as they flew into the sky like a murderous storm cloud.

Soon afterwards, a phone call was made to the village police station.



‘Inspector Doyle to see you, Ma’am.’

‘Thank you Sasha, do show him in. Oh, and could you bring me a blanket, please? It’s awfully cold in here’.

Inspector Doyle took off his gloves; placed one in each pocket of his trench coat and walked briskly into the study. There, slumped over his writing desk, was the body of Charles Toffsbury, Lord of the Manor and husband of Lady Josephine Toffsbury, who now sat in a large leather chair on the other side of the room. Her emerald coloured ball gown glistened in the moonlight.

‘Oh Inspector, it’s simply too dreadful to speak of. He was fine an hour ago. I was speaking to him myself. Then, when he didn’t join me to greet our guests, I came in here to look for him.’ Josephine Toffsbury buried her head in her hands.

‘Has anybody touched the...er... body, your Ladyship?’

She shook her head. ‘No, they couldn’t have. The door was locked from the inside and only my husband and I have a key. Oh, and Sasha of course, but that goes without saying.’

‘And who would this Sasha be, your Ladyship?’

‘That would be me, Inspector. I’m the head butler here at Hawthorn Manor’.

As he spoke he wrapped a blanket round Lady Toffsbury’s shoulders and walked over to the window. He was just about to close it when...

‘If you don’t mind, Sir’ said the Inspector politely, ‘I’d rather nothing in the room was touched, including the window. This is, after all, a crime scene.’

