



# Sad Cypress

by AGATHA CHRISTIE

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Elinor took the oath. She was answering Sir Edwin's questions in a low voice. The judge leaned forward. He told her to speak louder.

Sir Edwin was talking gently and encouragingly—all the questions to which she had rehearsed the answers. "You were fond of Roderick Welman?"

"Very fond. He was like a brother to me—or a cousin. I always thought of him as a cousin."

The engagement, drifted into it very pleasant to marry some one you had known all your life.

"Not perhaps, what might be called a passionate affair?"

(Passionate? Oh, Roddy.)

"Well, no, you see, we knew each other so well."

"After the death of Mrs. Welman, was there a slightly strained feeling between you?"

"Yes, there was."

"How did you account for this?"

"I think it was partly the money."

"The money?"

"Yes. Roderick felt uncomfortable. He thought people might think he was marrying me for that."

"The engagement was not broken off on account of Mary Gerrard?"

"I did think Roderick was rather taken with her, but I didn't believe it was anything serious."

"Would you have been upset if it had been?"

"Oh, no. I should have thought it rather unsuitable, that is all."

"Now, Miss Carlisle. Did you or did you not take a tube of morphine from Nurse Hopkins' attache case on June 28th?"

"I did not."

"Have you at any time had morphine in your possession?"

"Never."

"Were you aware that your aunt had not made a will?"

"No. It came as a great surprise to me."

"Did you think she was trying to convey to you a message on the night of June 28th when she died?"

"I understand that she had made no provision for Mary Gerrard, and was anxious to do so."

"And in order to carry out her wishes, you yourself were prepared to settle a sum of money on the girl?"

"Yes. I wanted to carry out Aunt Laura's wishes. And I was grateful for the kindness Mary had shown to my aunt."

"On July 26th did you come down from London to Maidensford and stay at the King's Arms?" asked the Prosecutor.

"Yes," answered Elinor.

"What was your purpose in coming down?"

"I had an offer for the house, and

the man who had bought it wanted possession as quickly as possible. I had to look through my aunt's personal things and settle things up generally."

"Did you buy various provisions on your way to the Hall on July 27th?"

"Yes. I thought it would be easier to have a picnic lunch there than to come back to the village."

"Did you then go on to the house, and did you sort through your aunt's personal effects?"

"I did."

"And after that?"

"I came down to the pantry and cut some sandwiches. I then went down to the lodge and invited the District Nurse and Mary Gerrard to come up to the house."

"Why did you do this?"

"I wished to save them a hot walk back to the village and back again to the lodge."

"I was, in fact, a natural and kindly action on your part. Did they accept the invitation?"

"Yes. They walked up to the house with me."

"Where were the sandwiches you had cut?"

"I left them in the pantry on a plate."

"Was the window open?"

"Yes."

"Any one could have got into the pantry while you were absent?"

"Certainly."

"If anybody had observed you from outside while you were cutting the sandwiches, what would they have thought?"

"I suppose that I was preparing to have a picnic lunch."

"They could not know, could they, that any one was to share the lunch?"

"No. The idea of inviting the other two only came to me when I saw what a quantity of food I had."

"So that if any one had entered the house during your absence and placed morphine in one of those sandwiches, it would be you they were attempting to poison?"

"Well, yes, it would."

"What happened when you had all arrived back at the house?"

"We went into the morning-room. I fetched the sandwiches and handed them to the other two."

"Did you drink anything with them?"

"I drank water. There was beer on a table; but Nurse Hopkins and Mary preferred tea. Nurse Hopkins went into the pantry and made it. She brought it in on a tray and Mary poured it out."

"Did you have any?"

"No."

"But Mary Gerrard and Nurse Hopkins both drank tea?"

"Yes."

"What happened next?"

"Nurse Hopkins went and turned the gas-ring off."

"Leaving you alone with Mary Gerrard?"

"Yes."

"What happened next?"

"After a few minutes I picked up the tray and the sandwich plate and carried them into the pantry. Nurse Hopkins was there, and we washed them together."

"Did Nurse Hopkins have her cuffs off at the time?"

"Yes. She was washing the things while I dried them."

"Did you make a certain remark to her about a scratch on her wrist?"

"I asked her if she had pricked herself."

"What did she reply?"

"She said, 'It was a thorn from the rose tree outside the lodge. I'll get it out presently.'"

"What was her manner at the time?"

"I think she was feeling the heat. She was perspiring and her face was a queer color."

"What happened after that?"

"We went upstairs, and she helped me with my aunt's things."

"What time was it when you went downstairs again?"

"It must have been an hour later."

"Where was Mary Gerrard?"

"She was sitting in the morning-room. She was breathing very queerly and was in a coma. I rang up the doctor on Nurse Hopkins' instructions. He arrived just before she died."

Sir Edwin squared his shoulders dramatically.

"Miss Carlisle, did you kill Mary Gerrard?"

(That's your cue. Head up, eyes straight.)

"No!"

Sir Samuel Attenbury. A sick beating at one's heart. Now—now she was at the mercy of an enemy! No more gentleness, no more questions to which she knew the answers!

But he began quite mildly. "You were engaged to be married, you have told us, to Mr. Roderick Welman?"

"Yes."

"You were fond of him?"

"Very fond."

"I put it to you that you were deeply in love with Roderick Welman and that you were wildly jealous of his love for Mary Gerrard?"

"No." (Did it sound properly indignant, that "no"?)

Sir Samuel said menacingly: "I put it to you that you deliberately planned to put this girl out of the way, in the hope that Roderick Welman would return to you."

"Certainly not." (Disdainful—a little weary. That was better.)

(To be continued)

## Stockton News

Mr. Harry Hammond of Hampton, Virginia spent a few days with his mother, Mrs. Kathryn Hammond, last week.

Miss Jeanette Hill of Snow Hill, and Mr. William Hill of Cambridge and Mr. Otho Marriner of Snow Hill were dinner guests Sunday, of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hill.

Mrs. Leslie Payne and Mrs. James Manning visited friends in Pocomoke, Tuesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Harris and daughter, of near Snow Hill, visited her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Parker Cherris, Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Rew of Girdle- tree visited her sister, Mrs. Nettie Hayden, Sunday.

Little Don Hallett Doughty of Snow Hill spent a few days last week with his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Pettit.

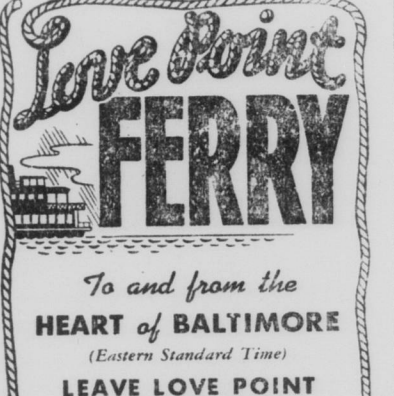
Mrs. Milton Barnes of Girdle- tree, visited her parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Sharpley, Wednesday.

Mr. Melvin Milbourn of Baltimore spent the week-end with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Milbourn.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Colona and son, of Jenkins Bridge, Va., and Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Pettit were guests Sunday of Mr. and Mrs. K. C. Pettit.

Mr. and Mrs. Everett Duncan of Salisbury, spent last week-end with Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Pilchard.

Those entertained to dinner Sunday at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Sharpley were: Mr. and Mrs. Kerbin Sturgis, Mrs. Besie Hayman of Snow Hill, Mr. and Mrs. Milton Barnes and daughter, Phyllis of Girdle- tree.



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