Chapter 4
The Adventure of the Radical Candidate

You may picture me driving the car for all it was worth over the moor that shining May morning. I was glancing back over my shoulder at first, but then I was content to keep glancing in the mirror for anyone following me.

I was desperately thinking through everything I had read in Scudder’s black book. What he’d told me was a complete pack of lies. His black book was telling a different tale. Instead of thinking that both were lies, I believed what was in the book.

The 15th June was a day of destiny. It was so big that I wasn’t even cross with Scudder for lying to me.

Hofgaard, Luneville, Avocado and Pavia were all the names of authorities. Then there were some other names: Ducrosne and Amersfoort. The basic details of the tale were all in the book and there was a phrase that was written inside brackets: (Thirty-nine steps). The last mention of them in the book said (Thirty-nine steps, I counted them – high tide 10:17 p.m.) but I didn’t know what it meant.

cross (adj) angry
The first thing I learned was the plot had nothing to do with war. I was sure that Karolides was the big event. It had been arranged since February 1912. The second thing was that war was going to come as a mighty big surprise to Britain.

Karolides’ death would drive the Balkans mad. Then Austria would get involved. Russia wouldn’t like it. Then Germany would pretend to try and smooth everything over but really be pouring oil on the waters. Then suddenly, it would be war.

While we were talking about goodwill and the good intentions of Germany, our coast would be rigged with mines and submarines would be waiting for every battleship. But it all depended on what would happen on 15th June.

The French were working on a real alliance with Britain. Not only would Karolides be in London, but so would the French as well as the men Scudder called Black Stone. When I called them the enemy, I was right. The information that the French were coming to get was going to end up in Black Stone’s pockets.

**rig (v)** to secretly put equipment (explosives, mines, etc.) somewhere
My first thought had been to write to the Prime Minister, but the more I thought about it, the more I was convinced it would be useless. Who would believe my story? I didn’t have any proof. No, I had to keep going and be ready to act when things got a little dicey. That was not going to be easy because the police of Great Britain were running after me in full cry and the watchers of Black Stone were silently trying to kill me.

I didn’t have a clear direction for my journey, but I went east. I used the sun to guide me. I remembered from the map in the atlas that this region was full of coal pits and industrial towns. I looked around as I drove. I couldn’t believe that all of this would be gone in a month and the fields would be full of dead men.

I turned off the main road and then I heard the sound of the aeroplane. It was flying low and close behind me. I drove as fast as I could. I had to get off the road. I heard a horn. A car was coming towards me on the narrow road. I tried to brake but it was too late. I had to swerve and ended up going through a hedge. I jumped out of the car just before it ended up in a stream.

“Are you hurt?” the man from the other car called.

“Just a few scratches. That was my fault. I’m sorry,” I replied.

dicey (adj) dangerous
in full cry (idiom) talking loudly (because you are full of anger, excitement, etc.)
swerve (v) to change direction suddenly in order to avoid hitting someone or something
“Come with me. I’ll help you. You can sleep in my house tonight,” he said. The house was only three minutes away. It was a large house that looked very comfortable. He took me into the house and gave me new clothes. I went to wash and change. When I came down, there was food waiting for me.

“You’ve got five minutes to eat and then we’re going out. We have to be at the Masonic Hall by eight o’clock. We’ll have supper when we get back,” my host said. I told him my name was Mr. Twisdon. He was the Liberal candidate for the area and there was a meeting that night. He persuaded me to go to the meeting with him. It turned out that his uncle was in the Cabinet. I had read some of his speeches in the papers. He was a very clean, decent and callow young man.

As we drove down the road, two policemen stopped us. “Begging your pardon, Sir Harry, we’ve been told to keep an eye out for a car like yours,” the policeman said.

“Right-o!” Sir Harry replied. I silently thanked God for bringing me to safety. After that, Sir Harry didn’t speak a word to me. He was concentrating on his speech. His lips kept muttering. His eyes wandered and for a moment I thought that we were going to have a second accident.

I racked my brains for something to say, but my mind was dry as a stone. The next thing I knew was that we had arrived at the Masonic Hall. There were noisy gentlemen who were wearing rosettes in the street who welcomed us.

callow (adj) without experience
mutter (v) to speak in a low voice so other people cannot hear what you say
rack one's brains (idiom) to think very hard to try to remember something
As we drove down the road, two policemen stopped us.
COMPREHENSION CHECK

Test 1
Are the following sentences TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)?

1. Hannay was six when he left Scotland. T / F
2. Richard Hannay worked for the Foreign Office. T / F
3. Hannay tells the men from the Government that Lord Alloa is a fake. T / F
4. Hannay had never fought in a war. T / F
5. Marmie came looking for Hannay for revenge. T / F
6. The paper had news of Mr. Scudder’s death in it. T / F
7. Mr. Turnbull was the name of the road man. T / F
8. Hannay went to stay at a hotel on the Ruff to look for the enemy. T / F
9. Sir Harry was working for the enemy. T / F
10. Black Stone was the name of the enemy. T / F
Test 3
Who said this in the story? Richard Hannay, Sir Walter, Sir Harry, Marmaduke Jopley, the hawk

1. “Richard Hannay, you’re in the wrong ditch. You’d better climb out.”

2. “Your name is Twisdon, isn’t it?”

3. “By God, the murderer!”

4. “Come in here a moment. I want a word with you.”

5. “This is a good morning for you, Richard Hannay.”

6. “Are you the innkeeper? You look a little young.”

7. “Give me that coat of yours.”

8. “For the murder of Mr. Scudder in London on 23rd May.”

9. “Come with me. I’ll help you. You can sleep in my house tonight.”

10. “We have to change our plan.”
I began to feel nervous ................. a) because b) when c) after the house wasn’t what I thought it would be like. I went back to the hotel and ................. the coast. I started to feel excited because I saw a small boat stopped not far off the coast of the Ruff. The man from Scotland Yard and I went ................. in a small boat. We caught lots of fish ................. we watched the small boat and the house on the Ruff. We went close to the small boat and found out that the men on the boat were all English. The small boat ................. to be very fast in the water and would get away very quickly from the coast.

1. a) because b) when c) after
2. a) watched b) have watched c) watching
3. a) to fish b) fishing c) fish
4. a) so b) if c) as
5. a) has built b) was built c) is building

I went up to bed and finished decoding Scudder’s black book. I sat up all night smoking my pipe, ................. I couldn’t sleep. At eight o’clock in the morning, two constables and a sergeant .................. They hid their car in the coach house. Twenty minutes later, I saw the car ................. down the road. It stopped in the wood.

6. a) unless b) for c) while
7. a) have arrived b) arrived c) arrive
8. a) coming b) came c) comes
Test 1
Fill in the blanks with the words below.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>count</th>
<th>chiefly</th>
<th>disguised</th>
<th>dire</th>
<th>decoy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>frank</td>
<td>agitated</td>
<td>confided</td>
<td>decode</td>
<td>culprit</td>
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</tbody>
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1. As he waited in the lounge, he was becoming extremely ____________ .

2. She was ____________ concerned about the safety of her children.

3. He ____________ to me that he was not happy about his marriage.

4. You cannot ____________ on him to do what he says as he is not that reliable.

5. The police arrested the ____________ at his house and seized a large amount of cash.

6. We asked for her assistance to help us to ____________ the documents.

7. The woman used her infant daughter as a ____________ to steal goods from the shop.

8. Following the devastating floods, the residents were in ____________ need of food and medical supplies.

9. The attacker ____________ himself as a police officer in order to enter the concert hall.

10. She was so angry as he was not completely ____________ with her about what happened.