

Miss Marple put on her hat and coat and went out to the taxi. 'Gossington Hall, please,' she said to the driver.

When she arrived at Gossington Hall, the door was opened by a new butler. Miss Marple asked to see Jason Rudd.

'I'm afraid it will be impossible this morning,' said the butler.

'Then I shall wait here until this afternoon.'

The butler went away, looking confused. Soon a young man came to Miss Marple. It was Hailey Preston.

'I've seen you before,' said Miss Marple. 'In the Development. You asked me the way to Blenheim Close. Can I see Mr Rudd?'

Hailey Preston smiled good-naturedly. 'Mr Rudd's a busy man,' he said. 'Why don't you tell me what you want?'

'I'm afraid,' said Miss Marple, 'that I want to see Mr Rudd himself. And,' she added, 'I shall wait here until I do.'

She sat down in a chair. Hailey Preston started to speak, then turned and went away. He came back with a much larger man.

'This is Dr Gilchrist, Miss - er -'

'Miss Marple.'

'So you're Miss Marple,' said Dr Gilchrist. He looked at her with great interest. 'I've heard about you from Dr Haydock. Now, you want to see Mr Jason Rudd? Why?'

'It is *necessary*,' said Miss Marple.

'And you're staying here until you do? But I'll tell you why you can't see Mr Rudd. His wife died last night in her sleep.'

'Dead!' cried Miss Marple. 'How?'

'An overdose of sleeping pills. But we don't want the newspapers to find out about it yet. So please don't tell anyone.'

'Of course. Was it an accident?'

'That's definitely my opinion.'

'But perhaps she killed herself. Or someone gave her the pills?' Gilchrist did not reply. Miss Marple took a deep breath.

'I'm sorry, but it really is necessary that I should see Mr Rudd.'

Gilchrist looked at her. 'Wait here,' he said, and he



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