

“Well, sir, you had better not know my name. It—it may make it easier for you and for me. And—and, if you please, sir, the lady is ill; you must come today, if you please, but not until the evening. Will twenty-two o’clock be convenient, sir?”

“Where is it?” asked Percy abruptly.

“It—it is near Croydon junction. I will write down the address presently. And you will not come until twenty-two o’clock, sir?”

“Why not now?”

“Because the—the others may be there. They will be away then; I know that.”

This was rather suspicious, Percy thought: discreditable plots had been known before. But he could not refuse outright.

“Why does she not send for her parish-priest?” he asked.

“She she does not know who he is, sir; she saw you once in the Cathedral, sir, and asked you for your name. Do you remember, sir?—an old lady?”

Percy did dimly remember something of the kind a month or two before; but he could not be certain, and said so.

“Well, sir, you will come, will you not?”

“I must communicate with Father Dolan,” said the priest. “If he gives me permission——”

“If you please, sir, Father—Father Dolan must not know her name. You will not tell him?”

“I do not know it myself yet,” said the priest, smiling.

The stranger sat back abruptly at that, and his face worked.

“Well, sir, let me tell you this first. This old lady’s son is my employer, and a very prominent Communist. She lives with him and his wife. The other two will be away to-night. That is why I am asking you all this. And now, you till come, sir?”

