

THE PEEK-A-BOO GIRL



The Field Gallery in West Tisbury is a simple geometrical structure of weather-beaten pine. But outside on a two-acre lawn Tom Maley has created a whimsical group of sculptured nymphs and goddesses and fauns. Here tourists have their pictures taken, weddings take place, and an occasional Shakespearean play is performed.

One Friday morning in late August, four people, entranced by this array of sculpture, were waiting for the gallery to open. At ten A.M. sharp, Fanny Bright, in charge of the gallery, got up from her desk and opened the doors. Ten minutes later the four came running at her with the news that *The Peek-a-Boo Girl*, a controversial work that had been touring the country, was slashed.

The four people were: Jose Gonza, a psychiatrist from Guatemala; Wendy Wurry, a patient under his care; Sydney Walstreet, owner of the Walstreet Gallery; and Jay Walker, an artist who was showing at the Walstreet Gallery and not drawing much of a crowd.

Fanny called Sam immediately. It was routine procedure to search Fanny and the four visitors and then make a thorough search of the premises. When nothing turned up, Sam went about questioning his suspects. Jose said he'd walked into the main room from one of its two entrances and seen Walstreet and Walker standing in front of the painting and talking quietly. Wendy said she'd come in from the other entrance and also had seen Walstreet and Walker talking. Sydney and Jay admitted it and said they'd been shocked at the vandalism and were discussing the extent of the damage when the two others came in. They all got excited at the damage, and all four went to report the matter to Fanny.

While Sam was evaluating the various statements, Wendy suddenly began screaming hysterically and pointing to Fanny.

"She—she did it! I know because I'm psychic. She used an old stiletto and it's in her drawer right now!"

Fanny was astounded. "She's obviously crazy, making such wild accusations." Then Fanny gave a shrug. "Go ahead and find it," she said to Wendy.

Wendy, still in a frenzy, gave Fanny a violent shove and elbowed her way past. "See!" she said, yanking open the drawer. "Look in here!"

The sketch shows both *The Peek-a-Boo Girl* and the drawer of Fanny's desk, with all the objects in it. Sam, not moving, studied the contents of the drawer, then stepped back and nodded.

What did he notice, and whom did he then take into custody?

Questions

1. Did Walker have a motive for sabotage?
2. Did Walstreet have a motive for sabotage?
3. Could one of the four have gone straight to the picture, slashed it, and, returning later on, pretend to discover the sabotage?
4. Are Walker's and Walstreet's accounts credible?
5. Can you think of a hiding place that Sam obviously missed?
6. Who slashed the picture?

Solution on page 53.