
CASEY AT THE PLATE



When the mighty Casey took that desperate ninth-inning slide at home plate and was called out, leaving the Martha's Vineyard Nine as the undisputed champions, the Mudville Pies fans erupted with cries of "Kill the ump! Bump the chump!" The umpire in question, I. M. Fair, managed to disappear immediately after the game. As for Casey, he sneaked off in disgrace.

For the next few hours, the Mudville bars were crowded and the mob ran rampant, ending up in a riot at the hotel where I. M. and his wife were thought to be hiding.

Furniture was smashed and several rooms were vandalized, but I. M. was no longer there. According to his account, he had escaped by climbing down a rain spout. He said he hated to leave "The Lady," as he called his wife, but after locking the door and warning her to open it to no one except himself, he left, saying he'd be back in a couple of hours. When he phoned her later, however, he was unable to reach her through the hotel switchboard, and he asked the clerk to go up to her room. The clerk, Twinky Starr, found the door open and The Lady's body lying in the bedroom, as shown.

When Mudville Police Chief Valerie Keen suggested that Sam team up with her in the investigation, he jumped at the chance. (He has since regarded the case as one of his own.)

After viewing the scene, the two chiefs questioned Twinky, the umpire, and the only other people known to have gone up to the second floor, where the Fairs had been staying in room 209. They were: Twinky Starr, the clerk; Sports Winnegar, manager of the Mudville Pies; Slippery Helm, his friend and long-time advisor; and Eric the Dead, so-called because he was usually dead-drunk.

Twinky, still reeling under the shock of finding a dead body, admitted telling Sports the number of the Fair room but swore she'd never left her post at the desk except for her brief visit to 209. Eric, however, said he'd seen her come out of the Fair suite. Asked how he knew it was I. M.'s room, Eric grew confused and asked for another drink.

On the basis of the above facts and statements, and after a careful examination of the bedroom, the two chiefs sized up the situation and made their diagnosis, after which Valerie made her arrest.

Whom did she arrest?

Questions

1. Do you think that the suspects could have transferred their hatred of the umpire to his wife?
2. Do you think that The Lady unlocked the room after I. M. had left?
3. Is it believable that when the clerk told Sports the Fair room number, she also gave him a pass key?
4. Had the bedroom been ransacked?
5. What is the evidence against Sports Winnegar? Against Slippery Helm? Against Twinky Starr? Against Eric the Dead? Against I. M. Fair himself?
6. Whom did Valerie arrest?

Solution on page 55.