CHAPTER 5

**The Spulzie at the Manse**

The facks o the spulzie at the manse cam tae us maistly throwe the tellin o the meenister an his wife. It happened in the wee oors o Whit Monday, the day gaen ower in Iping tae the Club pliskies. Mrs. Buntin, we wir telt, waukened up o a suddenty in the quaet that cams afore daybrakk, wi the strang thocht that the

yett o their bed chaumer hid lowsed an steekit. She didna steer her man at first, bit sat up in bed lippenin. She syne clear heard the dunt, dunt, dunt o nyaakit feet camin ooto the nearhaun dressin-chaumer an waukin alang the lobby tae the stairs. As sune as she felt siccar o thon, she steered the Rev. Mr. Buntin as quaet as she could. He didna strikk a licht, bit pittin on his glaisses, her dressin-goun an his safties, he gaed oot on the landin tae lippen. He heard clearly a ficherin gaun on at his study desk doon-ablow, an syne a strang sneeze.

At thon he gaed back tae his bed chaumer, airmed hissel wi the maist likely weapon, the poker, an gaed doon the stairs as sounless as he cud. Mrs. Buntin cam oot on the lobby.

The oor wis aboot fower, an the deepest derk o the nicht wis by. There wis a dweeble glimmer o licht in the haa, bit the study yett gappit pitmirk. Aathin wis quaet cept the dweeble skreichin o the stairs unner Mr. Buntin's fit, an the slicht meevements in the study. Syne somethin snappit, the drawer wis unsteekit, an there wis a reeshle o papers. Syne cam a sweir, an a spunk wis crackit an the study wis fulled wi yalla licht. Mr. Buntin wis noo in the haa, an throwe the crack o the yett he could see the desk an the drawer ajee, an a caunle burnin on the desk. Bit the reiver he couldnae makk oot. He stude thonner in the haa unkennin fit tae dae, an Mrs. Buntin, her face fite an intent, creepit slaw doon efter him. Ae thing keepit Mr. Buntin's virr; the thocht that this reiver bed in the clachan.

They heard the clink o siller, an jeloused that the reiver hid fand the hoosekeepin savins o gowd--twa puns ten in hauf sovereigns aathegether. At thon soun Mr. Buntin wis proddit tae act faist. Grippin the poker hard, he breenged intae the chaumer,close follaed bi Mrs. Buntin. "Gie yersel up!" skirled Mr. Buntin, roch-like, an syne stoppit, bumbazed. Bi the luik o’t the chaumer wis aathegither teem.

Yet their kennin that they’d, thon verra meenit, heard some cheil meevin in the chaumer hidbin siccar. Fur hauf a meenit, mebbe, they stude dumfounert, syne Mrs. Buntin gaed ower the chaumer an luikit ahin the screen, while Mr. Buntin, bi a sim’lar notion, teeted aneth the desk. Syne Mrs. Buntin turned back the windae-haps, an Mr. Buntin keekit up the lum an powkit it wi the poker. Syne Mrs. Buntin luikit inno the waste-paper basket an Mr. Buntin liftit the lid o the coal-scuttle. Syne they stoppit an stude wi winnerin een.

"I could hae sworn--" quo Mr. Buntin. "The caunle!" quo Mr. Buntin. "Fa lichtit the caunle?"

"The drawer!" Mrs. Buntin reponed. "An the siller's gane!"

She hashed tae the yett.

"O aa the unca ferlies --"

There wis a lood sneeze in the lobby. They hashed oot, an as they did sae the kitchie yett slammed tee. "Bring the caunle," quo Mr.Buntin, an led the wey. They baith heard a soun o bolts bein faist drawn back.

As he caad ajee the kitchie yett he saw ben the scullery that the back yett wis jist unsteekin, an the dweeble licht o early day brakk shawed the derk busses o the gairden ayont. He’s siccar that naethin gaed ooto the yett. It lowsed, stude ajee fur a meenit, an syne steeked wi a yark. As it did sae, the caunle Mrs. Buntin wis cairryin frae the study flichtered an fleered. It wis a meenit

or mair afore they gaed inno the kitchie.

The airt wis teem. They refaistened the back yett, luikit in the kitchie, pantry, an scullery tap tae boddom, an at the hinnereyn gaed doon intae the cellar. There wisnae a sowel tae be fand in the hoose, raik as they wid.

Daylicht fand the meenister an his wife, a fey-like rigget oot pair, still mervellin on their ain grun flair by the unnocht licht o a foonerin caunle.