

around in its basket.

'Is that your final answer?' Mike said.

'Yes, I think so.'

'Well, is it, or isn't it?'

'Yes, it is.'

'What was the name again?'

'Château Branaire-Ducru. Pretty little farm. Lovely old house. I know it quite well. I can't think why I didn't recognize it immediately.'

'Come on, Daddy,' the girl said. 'Turn the bottle round and let's have a look. I want my two houses.'

'Just a minute,' Mike said. 'Wait just a minute.' He was sitting very quiet, and his face was becoming pale, as though all the force was flowing slowly out of him.

'Michael!' his wife called out sharply from the other end of the table. 'What's the matter?'

'Keep out of this, Margaret, will you please.'

Richard Pratt was looking at Mike, smiling with his mouth, his eyes small and bright. Mike was not looking at anyone.

'Daddy!' the daughter cried. 'You don't mean to say he guessed it right!'

'Now, stop worrying, my dear,' Mike said. 'There's nothing to worry about.'

I think it was more to get away from his family than anything else that Mike then turned to Richard Pratt and said, 'I think you and I had better go into the next room and have a little talk.'

'I don't want a little talk,' Pratt said. 'All I want is to see the name on that bottle.'

He knew he was a winner now and I could see that he was prepared to become thoroughly nasty if there was any trouble. 'What are you waiting for?' he said to Mike. 'Go on and turn it round.'

white-and-black umbrella, was standing beside Richard Pratt, holding something out in her hand. 'I believe these are yours, sir,' she said.

Pratt looked round, saw the pair of glasses that she held out to him, and for a moment he paused. 'Are they? Perhaps they are, I don't know.'

'Yes, sir, they're yours.' The servant was an old woman — nearer seventy than sixty — a trusted employee of the family for many years. She put the glasses down on the table beside him.

Without thanking her, Pratt picked them up and slipped them into his top pocket.

But the servant did not go away. She remained standing beside Richard Pratt, and there was something so unusual in her manner and in the way she stood there, small, still and upright, that I found myself watching her with sudden anxiety. Her old grey face had a cold, determined look.

'You left them in Mr Schofield's study,' she said. Her voice was unnaturally, deliberately polite. 'On top of the green cupboard in his study, sir, when you happened to go in there by yourself before dinner.'

It took a few moments for the full meaning of her words to be understood, and in the silence that followed I saw Mike slowly pulling himself up in his chair, and the colour coming to his face, and his eyes opening wide, and the curl of his mouth — and a dangerous whiteness beginning to spread around his nose.

'Now, Michael!' his wife said. 'Keep calm now, Michael, dear! Keep calm!'