

like a foreign gentleman to me. I'd hardly got here this morning when he rang."

Terhune finished the call then a second call was put through. It found Warren Demster at Walton Heath, and he sounded none too pleased on the phone.

"Hello, hello!" he rasped. "Who is it? I'm not talking business with anyone today. I'm taking the day off. Please make your inquiries another day."

"Sorry, Mr Demster, but this is something unusual. I have a Scotland Yard man with me. I'm Paul Terhune, the detective, and I want to come down and see you at once."

"What the dickens for?" thundered the stockbroker. "I've got no negotiations on at the moment, and I'm on my way to my golf club."

"We have to see you, perhaps for your own good," snapped Paul Terhune, losing his patience. "I must ask you not to have your game of golf until I arrive. Furthermore, on no account leave the house or give an interview to a foreigner."

"I'll explain when I arrive, and if you value your life, stay indoors until I get there," finished Terhune curtly and replaced the receiver.

Woods declared he must stop in London to look after that end of the case. He knew Terhune, and they would work amicably together, as they had done so many times in the past.

He would learn the result of the interview later.

So it came about that Paul Terhune found himself driving westwards for the second time in twelve hours, and after a swift trip he reached the palatial house surrounded by spacious grounds which Demster had built for himself.

Accustomed to giving orders, Demster turned on Terhune with a growl.

"What is it you want?"

"Did you know Sir Andrew Fothergill was murdered this morning?" asked the detective, with deliberate suddenness.

The other sat down with a crash in the nearest chair and tugged at his collar. The veins in his head showed prominently as he glared at his visitor.

"Murdered! But—but why—by whom?" he demanded.

"That's what we are trying to find out. He was strangled, and we have reason to believe there are people planning to

do the same to you. That's why I asked you to wait here till I came."

The big man had collapsed like a punctured bladder. His eyes became glazed, and he licked his lips feverishly. There was no doubt that he valued his life and was badly scared.

"Have you received any warnings or threats of any kind? Have you ever received a scarab-beetle like this?"

Terhune held out the little china beetle, and Demster recoiled as though he had been stung.

"G-gracious, no. I never did like those beastly things. I saw a lot of them out in Egypt when I was camping," he gasped.

"You mean on the Fothergill Expedition of 1962, which you

financed," said the detective. "Yes, these beetles are peculiar to the Temple of Mempho, or so I'm told."

"You are sure you've never received or seen one of these recently?" asked Terhune.

"Quite sure!" The broker was regaining his composure. "And what is all this nonsense leading up to?"

"I believe the only white men on that trip were Sir Andrew, Max Hargreaves, a young sportsman named Keith Burton, yourself, and your manservant, who was called Larry."

"Yes, but—"

"Yesterday I received information from Mr Hargreaves that attempts had been made on his life because of his part in that expedition. He was so

terrified that he begged for my protection. He told me he believed all the members of the party were in danger."

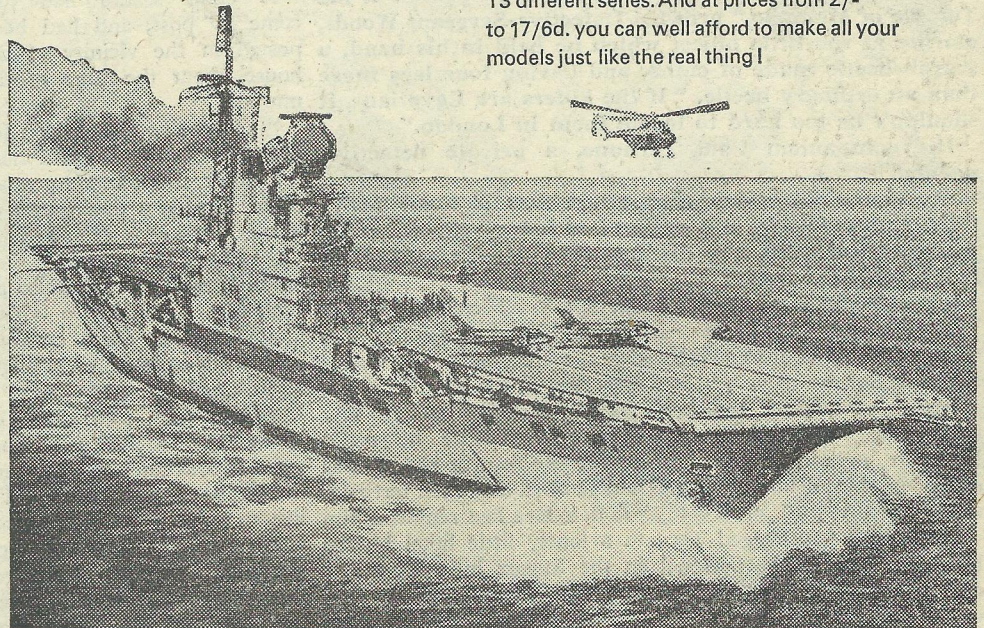
"This morning, at eight o'clock, Sir Andrew Fothergill was found strangled in his bedroom, which was locked from the inside. I tried to get in touch with you to give you warning. Have you received a visit from any foreigner this morning?"

Demster gripped the arms of the chair in which he sat, and leaned forward. There was a strange look in his eyes.

"Hargreaves told you that? Hargreaves was the first one to bring this matter to your notice?"

"Yes, he engaged me," said the detective.

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