

The Fifth Tenant

It was a cold rainy night. Red and yellow neon lights became blurred spots. Only few people would dare to walk on the street tonight. Even with umbrellas or raincoats, it was still easy to get wet from head to toe. At the very midnight, a small apartment near Parker Street was filled with people. A young man who studied in Capital College was founded dead in his own room. One of his roommates called the police and they arrived immediately. The victim's name was Lennon; he was twenty years old with a thin cheek and hallowed eyes. Sheriff John Kimble had gathered all the witnesses in order to find out how Lennon died.

Lennon's body did not have any obvious wounds, but his face revealed that he might see something really terrible. He was holding an empty glass bottle, which did not have any notes or marks on it. No matter what was in the bottle, it had already gone. John was the first officer arrived at the scene. He stepped into Lennon's room carefully and soon he found out that the only window in the room was locked from inside. Since Lennon lived in the sixth floor, it was impossible for a murderer to climb in. And if the murderer came from outside, how could he or she get away without being noticed? However, if Lennon committed suicide, his face should look painful instead of horror. John sat on a chair and took out his note. "The only way to find out how this young man died is through witnesses," he told himself.

Lennon's two roommates Eric and Phil were also at the same place. Phil was a short man with beard on his chin. He did not say a word since the police came. On the contrary, Eric was tall and handsome. He has blond hair, blue eyes and kept talking to his girlfriend Mona. John approached these people but none of them seemed to be aware of him.

"Excuse me, who called 911 in the first place?"

There was a short pause between them.

"I did," Phil answered. He did not even look at John. "I heard him screaming."

"You mean a few minutes ago he was still alive?" John asked.

"Maybe, I don't know." Phil spoke like he was talking to himself.

"What do you mean you don't know?"

"I said I don't know! And that means I DON'T KNOW."

Phil's voice suddenly increased, but John could tell that Phil was trembling.

"Well, officer, I suggest you ask someone else." Eric said, stepping forward and whispering to John. "Phil has some bad hobbies, like...you know, drinks and...what do you guys called it? Marijuana? Sometimes he would take too much, so did Lennon. Maybe that's the reason why Lennon died." He patted John's shoulder and blinked. Almost at the same time, Phil screamed "No! You don't understand. He's here."

"Who's here?" John began to feel confused. Eric and Mona frowned as if Phil just said something that would hurt their ears.

“Come on, stop acting like a fool. You drank too much again, did you?” Eric said with a sarcastic tone.

Phil turned to John and grasped his hand. “Officer, you must believe me. He’s here. The fifth tenant...I warned Lennon but he just didn’t listen. We have been cursed.”

“Stop your day dreaming, weirdo.” Mona spilt on the floor. “This place sucks. I’m leaving.”

“No! You can run, but you can’t hide. We all saw him before.” Phil sat at the corner, shaking.

“What the hell are you talking about?” Mona shouted.

“Remember we went out for dinner last Tuesday? You, Eric, me and Lennon?” said Phil.

“What’s wrong with the dinner?” Eric asked. He put down his cigar and matches.

“We only have four people but we ordered five meal...” Phil murmured.

“That’s just a mistake for the waitress, it’s no big deal.” Eric said.

“You have too much alcohol in your head Phil, we did have five people last Tuesday.” Mona said.

“We did?” Eric asked.

“Hell yeah! You, me, Lennon, Phil and Lennon’s friend.”

“Did you remember his name, face or anything?” John asked and kept taking notes.

“Well...I can’t remember his name or face, he just sat there without uttering a word...what?” Mona found Eric was staring at her so she stopped talking. “I did not remember that guy. Where did he sit?” Eric asked.

“Just between you and Lennon, what’s wrong?”

“You saw him before, Eric. It was you who first saw him. Two weeks ago you said you saw a man coming into Lennon’s room. Remember that? He got a glass bottle....” Phil uttered.

“I thought that man was your friend, or at least Lennon’s friend. So I did not pay any attention to him. Besides, It was dark and rainy that day. It was hard for me to recognized anyone in this gloomy room.” Eric replied.

The Sheriff looked around the room. It was true that without lights or other electricity equipment, Lennon’s room would be in totally darkness at night.

“You guys are all crazy. It’s probably just one of the visitors or something.” Mona yawned. “I’m tired of this. Can I leave now?”

John closed his note. It was obvious that the man, or probably one of these people was the cause of Lennon’s death. If he could find out who was lying, he could end this case immediately.

“OK, but I hope you can go to the station for a while. We have to make some records.”

One by one, they left the apartment. Sheriff John Kimble sat on the chair again and

tried to organize the whole case. However, a sudden thunder drew his attention back to reality. He found out there was a man standing at the corner. How come he didn't notice him? "Hey! Who are you? " he shouted. The man didn't say anything. He just smiled, with the glass bottle on his hand.