

* 45sun went down the rain came i sat near the window of the living room watched the rain and thought about my family and friends back home in england teachings came and sat next to me and * put her head on my leg looking sad the room was dark behind me and the only noise was the noise of the rain driving down out of the night sky suddenly without a sound strickland's servant was * there standing next to me his coat and shirt were wet from the rain sorry sir there's a man here sir he's asking to see somebody the servant said i asked him to bring a light and i went * to the front door but when the light came there was nobody there when i turned i thought i saw a face looking in through one of the windows from the garden it disappeared quickly perhaps he went * round to the back door i said to the servant so we went through the living room and the quiet dark kitchen to the back door but there was nobody there i went back to my chair * and my thoughts by the window not very happy with strickland's servant and not very happy about the face of the window the strange visitor in the rain i took some sugar with me to give to teachings but she was out in the garden * standing in the rain and did not want to come inside she looked frightened i thought some time later strickland arrived home very wet and the first thing he asked was any visitors * i told him about the disappearing visitor in the rain i thought perhaps he had * something important to tell you i said but then he ran away without giving his name strickland said * nothing and his face * showed nothing he took out a cigarette and sat smoking it for a few minutes without a word at nine o'clock he said he was tired i was tired too so we got up to go to bed teachings was * outside in the rain very wet strickland called her again and again he held out sugar for her but she did not want to come into the house she does this every evening now he said sadly * i can't understand it she's got a good warm room in here but she doesn't come inside and sleep in it she started doing this soon after we came to live in this place let's leave her she can sleep out there * if she wants to but i knew he was not happy to leave her outside in the rain the rain started and stopped again and again all night * but teachings stayed outside she slept near my bedroom window and i heard her moving about i slept very lightly and i had bad dreams in my half sleep i dreamt that somebody was calling to me * in the night asking me to come to them to help them then i woke up cold with fear and found there was nobody there once in the night i looked out of the window and saw the big dog out there in * the rain with the hair on her neck and back standing up and a frightened angry look on her face i slept again but woke up suddenly when somebody tried to open the door of * my room they did not come in but walked on through the house later i thought i heard the sound of someone crying i ran through to strickland's room thinking he was ill * or that he wanted my help but he laughed at my fears and told me to go back to bed i did not sleep again after that i listened to the rain and waited for the first light of morning * i stayed in the house with strickland and his dog for two more days teachings was quite happy inside the house all day but as soon as night came she moved out * into the garden and stayed there i understood i was happy in the house in the daytime too but in the evening and at night i did not like it there was something very strange about * the place i heard the noise of feet on the floor but there was nobody there i heard doors open and close i heard chairs move and i thought somebody watched me from * the darkest corners of the rooms when i walked round the house at dinner on the third evening i talked to strickland i'm going to the hotel tomorrow they've got a room there now * i'm very sorry but i can't stay here it's the noises in the house you see i'm not getting any sleep at night and i can't work well in the day because i'm

too tired he listened carefully and i knew he * understood strickland is a very understanding stay with me for another day or two my friend he said please don't go wait and see what happens i know what you're talking about i know * there's something very strange about this house and i want to know what it is i think teachings knows she doesn't like coming inside after dark * suddenly he stopped talking his eyes on one corner of the ceiling above my chair well look at that he said quietly i turned and looked up there was the head of a very * dangerous brown snake cordica right in india it was looking at us with its cold little eyes from a small door in that corner of the ceiling i stood up quickly and moved away from * that corner of the room i do not like any snakes i am afraid of them and the karate is one of the most dangerous and frightening snakes it kills so easily and so quickly * get it down and break its back i said it's very hard to catch those brown snakes you know strickland answered they move so fast but let's try bring that light over i carried the light across to the corner * of the room where the snake was watching it carefully all the time it did not move strickland carried his chair over to the same corner took one of his guns from a cupboard near the door * and climbed up on the chair but the snake saw him coming its head suddenly disappeared and we heard it move away across the ceiling above our heads snakes like it up there in the ceiling it's nice and warm * said strickland but i don't like having them there i'm going up to catch it he pushed open the small door in the ceiling and put his head and arms through he had the gun in one hand ready to hit * the snake with it and break its back i watched from below i heard strickland say i can't see that snake but hello what's this there's something up here * and i saw him pushing at something with the gun i can't quite get it he said and then suddenly it's coming down be careful down there stand back i jumped back * something hit the center of the ceiling hard from above broke noisily through it into the room and hit the dinner table it broke some glasses and plates on the table there was water all over the floor * i went over with the light and looked down at the thing on the table strickland climbed quickly off the chair and stood next to me it was a man a dead man * i think strickland said slowly that our friend imrae is back suddenly something moved out from under one leg of the thing on the table it was the brown snake the karate trying * to get away so the snake came down with our dead friend i see strickland said and he pushed the snake off the table onto the floor hit it with his gun and broke its back * i looked at the dying snake on the floor and said nothing strickland went over to a cupboard and took out a bottle of whiskey and two glasses he gave me a drink is it imrae * i asked yes that's imrae he answered and somebody killed him now we knew why there were noises around the house at night and why teachings did not like sleeping * inside the house she knew that imrae was up there dead she knew that imrae's ghost walked through the house at night trying to find somebody to help him a minute later we heard teachings * outside she pushed open the door with her nose and came in she looked at the dead man on the table and sat down on the floor next to strickland looking up at him you * knew imrae was up there all the time over our heads strickland said to the dog looking down at her somebody killed him and perhaps you know who did it too dead men do not climb up into the * ceilings of houses and close the ceiling door behind them so the question is who put him there and closed the ceiling door and who killed him let's think about it * let's think about it in the other room i said not here you're right said strickland with a smile let's go into the living room we went through to the living room and * sat there smoking cigarettes and drinking our whiskey strickland said nothing but

sat quietly and thought for a minute or two his gun was on the floor next to his chair * so imrae is back he said again slowly you know when i took this house i took imrae's three servants too they stayed here to work for me did one of them kill him * i was not quite happy about that when i questioned them at the time imrae disappeared you know why not call them in one at a time and question them again i said see what they have to say * there was a noise at the back door from the kitchen it was bahadur khan strickland's servant coming in to take the dinner things away strickland called him and the man came into the living room without any noise * he wore no shoes he was a tall and strong looking man he stood quietly near the door and waited it's a very warm night bahadur khan do you think * more rain is coming strickland began yes sir i think it is the servant answered when did you first start to work for me bahadur khan when you came to live in this house you * know that after mr imrae suddenly went away to europe sir he went away to europe you say why do you say that all the servants say * he went to europe sir do they that's very strange bahadur khan i asked them before but they didn't know you said it to me bahadur khan but they didn't know and mr imrae went to europe * you say but he never said a word about it to his friends or to his other servants before he went he told only you do you not think that is strange it is * strange sir the man answered very quietly and why do you say it why do you want us to think mr imrae went to europe the tall man did not answer he looked very frightened now * his eyes were white in the dark he moved nearer the door but strickland went on but now suddenly mr imrae is back again bahadur khan * he's back in this house come and see him he's waiting for his old servant strickland took his gun off the floor and stood up quickly he pushed the gun into bahadur khan's face sir the tall indian moved back very * frightened now and put up his hands go and look at the thing on the table in the next room bahadur khan strickland said go on take the light go and see * mr imrae he's waiting for you slowly the man took the light and walked to the door strickland was behind him pushing the gun into his back the tall indians stopped near the table * and looked down at the dead man his face was yellow with fear you see are strickland coldly mr imrae is back i see sir and now i know you killed him bahadur * khan why i killed him sir yes he was not a good man sir he put his hand * on my child's head one day the next day my child was very ill and the next day he died he was my oldest son sir mr imrae killed my son * he was a bad man so i killed mr imrae in the evening of the same day when he came back from his office then i put him up above the ceiling and closed the door * strickland turned to me you hear that he killed him ray he said then he went on you were clever bahadur khan but mr imrae came back and now i'm taking you to the police * station but no sir bahdu khan said with a sad smile we are not going to the police stations look sir he moved back from the table and showed us his foot there was the * head of the brown snake the deadly karate with its teeth in his foot you see sir i killed mr imrae but i do not want to die at the hands of the police * so i am dying now here this snake is killing me an hour later bahadur khan was dead strickland called some of his policemen