

Deception

The shiny, black car pulled into the winding driveway leading to the darkened mansion. The car brought the renowned detective, Charles Baker. Charles stepped out of the car and slammed the door with a *thud*. He was ready to get down to business. He had been contacted because there had been an awful occurrence at the mansion, somebody had been murdered and it was his job to figure out who did it and what their motive was.

Charles knocked on the mahogany door until the butler finally answered.

"Can I help you sir?" the butler asked.

"Yes, I think you can. Can you tell Mrs. Baxter that I am here to see her?" Charles asked politely.

"Yes, May I ask who is calling on her?" the butler inquired.

Charles debated on what he should tell the butler. He wondered if it was possible that the butler could be a suspect and he did not want to scare anybody off that might know something about the crime that had taken place. He decided to tell the butler that he was a friend of Mrs. Baxter.

"I see," the butler said. "I will tell her that you are here. Will you have a seat while I go get Mrs. Baxter for you?"

Charles took a seat and while he was sitting there in the parlor the maid walked by.

The maid was a young lady with short, black hair and long, red, fake nails. She was muttering to herself as she walked by. She acted as if she were really distraught about something. The butler returned to the parlor, but there was no Mrs. Baxter with him.

"Mrs. Baxter, will see you in the study." the butler said.

"Could you point me in the direction of the study?" Charles asked.

"Why certainly, how rude of me for not suggesting that myself. Will you look

over me?" the butler asked. "I am still really upset over the... " ,the butler stopped mid-sentence. I stopped and waited for him to finish his sentence, but he never did. Instead, he only offered up an excuse as to why he didn't finish telling me what had him really upset.

"Oh, I am sorry, I just keep rambling don't I. Well, here is the door to the study." the butler said quickly, acting as if he wanted to hurry up and get out of my presence. The door to the study was cracked and through the crack Charles could see a young, petite woman pacing the floor in front of the fireplace. He pushed the door open and it *screeched* as he tried to open it, which immediately let the woman know that he was there.

"Hello, I am Mrs. Baxter. I am guessing that you are the detective Charles Baker that I sent for," she said very politely.

"Yes, I am and I am ready to start my full investigation of the crime. Could you tell me everything you know about your husband's murder?" Charles asked Mrs. Baxter, trying to make her understand that he needed her to answer his questions.

Mrs. Baxter remained silent. Charles could see that she was having a hard time recalling these horrific past events, but he needed her testimony of what happened to begin his investigation.

"I know this is hard for you Mrs. Baxter, it being your husband that was murdered and all ,but I really need you to answer my questions and tell me what happened so I can figure out who killed your husband and what their motive was." Charles said pleadingly. That broke her silence because then she looked at me with tears in her eyes and started to tell me all that she knew about her husband's murder.

"It all started, four days ago, when my husband decided to throw a big party to celebrate the big case they won." she told Charles. " My husband was actually a lawyer for a big firm here in North

Carolina. Well, he invited all of the people from the firm and even some close family and friends to come over to the house for the celebration because not only were we going to celebrate his firm's big case that they had won, but we also planned to make an announcement." She paused to catch her breath and started again. "We planned to announce that we were expecting a baby," That is when Mrs. Baxter started to get a little emotional.

"I know how hard this must be for you, but you need to try your best to finish telling me the rest of your story," Charles told her, trying not to sound cruel and heartless. Charles did not succeed because she looked at him and he could see the anger and hurt in her eyes. She thought that Charles was the most heartless person on Earth, but he was only trying to do his job. He wanted to see the murder wearing stripes, sitting behind bars.

"Well," she said with a *sniffle*. "Like I started telling you before, we were going to announce that night that we were about to become parents. The proud parents of a baby boy." Mrs. Baxter looked up to see if Charles was still engaged in her story. When she saw that he was still listening she began again. "Everybody seemed overjoyed at the news of Mr. Baxter and I becoming the proud parents of a baby boy or at least to me it seemed as if everyone was happy for us," Mrs. Baxter said questioningly. "I had been talking to lots of people that night about my husband and I's wonderful news that I had not even noticed that my husband was no longer in the room," Mrs. Baxter said.

"Where did he go?" Charles questioned.

"Well, at the time I thought that maybe he had to go to the restroom and did not want to interrupt me while I was talking to our guests to tell me where he was going, so I just assumed that he excused himself," Mrs. Baxter said. "I began to notice that my husband had been

gone for a while when all of the guests had already left and said their goodbyes and he was still no where to be found. That is when I really began to worry," Mrs. Baxter said with a frown on her face. "I was worried because I knew that it was unlike him not to tell me where he was going. Usually if he had to go somewhere and knew that he would be gone a while he would tell me where he was going so that I would not worry about him. I began to look for him and call out his name, but my husband never answered. I guess I knew then that something wasn't right, but I never suspected that he had been murdered!" Mrs. Baxter told Charles. "I looked all over the house opening doors to all the rooms right and left, but my husband was still no where to be found that is until I opened the door to the indoor swimming pool. Laying there in the pool was my husband," Mrs. Baxter said as a tear slowly fell down her face. "It was an awful sight to see my husband's body floating in the pool face down."

Charles interrupted her to say, "Is the cause of his death known yet from the autopsy?"

"I got the results back today and it said that he had marks on his neck from where he had been strangled to death. I wonder why his body was found in the pool if he had been strangled to death?" Mrs. Baxter asked.

"Apparently, somebody thought that they could hide the cause of Mr. Baxter's death," Charles answered. "Is that all you know about your husband's murder?"

"Yes, that is all I know." She paused, "Wait a minute! I think that I just thought of something that might be able to help you," Mrs. Baxter said. "My husband did have one enemy and his name is Jeremy Richards. Jeremy is one of his co-workers at the law firm."

Charles decided to ask another question. "Why was he your late husband's

enemy?

"To be honest, my husband really did not consider him as an enemy because he really had no problem with the guy. Mr. Richards was the one that did not like my husband and it was all because my husband got appointed the case that he wanted three years ago and he never forgave him for it," Mrs. Baxter said. "I don't know if Jeremy was the man that murdered my husband, but he is the only person that I can think of that might have a reason for seeing him dead.

Charles bid Mrs. Baxter farewell and told her he was going to check out the pool where her husband's body had been found. When he got to the door of the pool he felt a cold shiver run down his spine. It was kind of surprising because Charles was a detective and he had worked lots of crime scenes, but never had he felt this feeling before. It was kind of frightening, but he pressed on because he wanted to see this put to rest. Looking down into the pool there was no physical evidence that Mr. Baxter had been murdered here, which meant that the autopsy results were correct. Mr. Baxter had been strangled to death and there would be no need for there to be any physical evidence because there was no murder weapon. Unless, the murderer dropped something while putting the body into the pool. Charles decided to take a look inside of the pool to see if any evidence could be found there. He put on his swimming clothes and swam to the bottom of the pool. He was lucky because there was something on the concrete bottom of the pool and it was a ball point pen. The ball point pen had the name of a law firm on it. Charles had found his first clue. He was one step closer to solving this mystery. He decided to send the pen off to the Forensics lab to have them run tests on it to see if they could figure out who the pen belonged to. The forensics lab found out that the pen actually had Jeremy Richards fingerprints on it, so it looked as if Jeremy had been to the Baxter's during the time that Mr. Baxter was

murdered.

Charles decided to start questioning people about the murder of Mr. Baxter. The first person he questioned was the butler.

"Where were you the night Mr. Baxter was killed? Charles looked towards the butler to see if he was going to give him a straight answer or nervously search for one.

"I was here of course helping the Miss' serve the guests," the butler answered.

"Did you have anything against Mr. Baxter?" Charles asked. The butler looked as if he had just been offended.

"Heavens no! Mr. Baxter was my boss and a fine one at that!" the butler looked at Charles kind of funny and asked him a question, " Why are you asking me all these questions?"

Charles had to think of what to reply, but he ended up saying, " Like I told you before I am a friend of Mrs. Baxter's and I really want to know everything that went on the night that my friend was murdered."

"I can understand that," the butler replied. "Mr. Baxter was a good man and I hope that somebody finds out soon who killed him."

Charles slowly made his way up the spiral staircase to the guest room where he would be staying until he solved the mystery. Each step seemed to creak as he was walking up the stairs. He finally made it to the top of the stairs to the guest room and found a note on the bed. The note read as follows:

If you know what is good for you, you should get out of here and never come back!!

The note was not signed, but there was something about this letter that stood out to me. It was written on the firm's stationery. Charles decided that he needed to get right over to the law firm and question Jeremy because it seemed as if he might have some of the answers to the questions

he was asking lately.

Charles rushed down the stairs grabbed his coat and asked Mrs. Baxter the directions to the law firm that Mr. Richards worked for.

"622 Cornerstone Boulevard is where the office building is and their firm is located in room number 234," Mrs. Baxter yelled as he was going out the door.

Charles made sure to thank Mrs. Baxter for her directions before rushing out the door. When he got there he immediately ran into a man coming out of the office building.

"I'm sorry, sir," the man said very politely.

"It's ok," Charles said. "I should be the one apologizing to you. I was in too big of a hurry to meet someone before the firm closed that I wasn't really watching where I was going."

Charles began to think, *maybe this guy can help me find Jeremy?*

Charles decided to ask the man if he could help him find a Mr. Jeremy Richards before the office closed and he was very surprised at the man's answer. He told Charles that he was Mr. Richards. *Wow!* This man does not look like anything that I pictured him to be after what Mrs. Baxter told me.

"Where would be a good place for us to talk Mr. Richards?" Charles asked.

"We can go to my office and talk if you want," Mr. Richards replied kindly.

We walked into the building and Mr. Richards took Charles straight to his office. When they both were inside the office they shut the door behind them, so they could be sure that they were speaking in private. Charles looked on Mr. Richards desk and there was a whole stack of folders with the firm's stationary just like the one he had found today at the mansion with the note on it. He knew that there stationary was unique to the firm and that there could be no other just like it, but he found it odd that two of the clues pointed to this law firm and more specifically

to Jeremy Richards. He decided to put his discovery aside and ask him some questions.

"Ok, Mr. Richards. Do you know a John W. Baxter?" Charles asked.

"Why yes, I do. How is he doing? Mr. Richards asked in what seemed like a friendly manner. Charles looked at him with a puzzled look on his face.

"Have you not heard? Mr. Baxter has been murdered!" Mr. Richards face seemed to change when Charles told him the news of Mr. Baxter's death.

"I know John and I had our disagreements, but I really hate to hear that he is dead," Mr. Richards said.

Charles decided to bid Mr. Richards farewell. While he was leaving the office he started thinking about all that was going on in his case right now. The one thing that kept coming up over and over in his mind was the fact that Jeremy Richards was not at all the way Mrs. Baxter described him. Another thing, he noticed was that she told him that Jeremy and her husband were enemies, but according to Jeremy they only had the occasional disagreement. Her information was not adding up.

Aha! It is all starting to come together now. Charles was on his way back to the mansion to have a talk with Mrs. Baxter. When he finally made it back to the mansion he could hear someone talking on the phone. The voice he heard sounded like Mrs. Baxter and it sounded as if she were talking to the insurance company. She was collecting her husband's life insurance money. She finally got off the phone and Charles was standing right there. He had overheard the whole conversation.

"You killed your husband. Didn't you? You tried to make it look like Jeremy Richards committed the murder, but you did it!" Charles accused.

"Yes, I did it! I strangled my husband and pushed his body in the pool and made it look as if Jeremy did it," Mrs. Baxter said through her tears.

"Why did you do such a horrid thing?" Charles asked.

"I am greedy and I wanted all of my husband's money for my baby and I." she said with not even an ounce of shame in her voice. " I planned to take my husband's life insurance policy and move to Europe."

"I guess that I have to call the cops and turn you in," Charles said.

"I am ready to turn myself in," Mrs. Baxter admitted. "I guess that I knew that I would never get away it." she said with a sad look on her face.

The cops then showed up and handcuffed Mrs. Baxter and stuck her in their squad car. As, I watched the cops pull out of the driveway with Mrs. Baxter in the back, I thought to myself *I guess this is proof that looks can be deceiving.*