

Six Houses Six Secrets

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This is a novel with some historical facts here and there.

All characters in this novel were invented by the author and any resemblance to living or dead figures is purely coincidental. The geographical settings are also invented. Many of the backgrounds are real, although some of the establishments described in this book are fictional.

In the Vaucluse (Fr.) it seems that the residents have agreed with each other that the shutters on the windows are painted in the color (lavender) blue. By far the most houses have this beautiful bright color. It contrasts nicely with the warm yellow color of the stones with which the houses are built.

No.

This is not a story about wooden shutters on the windows of a village in the South of France. It is a tale about a group of residents of six houses who do not know each other until they find themselves in a bizarre game whose attractive reward interests them first.

But what do the wooden shutters have to do with it? Well, read this book and you will find out for yourself. The acquaintance of the residents who will amuse you in the coming pages will first introduce themselves to you.

Lies, love, hate, sadness, happiness, wine and money

Les Six Volets (original title)

Six houses, Six Secrets

Naturally for Christine and Volkert



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Prologue

The holidaymakers are relaxing on one of the decks, enjoying the sun, the pool, and the exotic cocktails with tasty snacks. A band plays South American music. Everything seems fine until suddenly the ship's horn sounds. Three long blasts.

Everyone looks around in shock, but it soon becomes clear that something serious is going on because the staff runs back and forth uncoordinated. The peaceful situation turns into panic and people move towards the nearby gangways as they have been instructed in an alarm situation. Another exercise, like in Barcelona? Some think.

But they all know exactly what this signal means. Emergency.

In their spotless white clothes, none of the thousand cabin crew members still know what is going on and urge the guests throughout the ship to remain calm and put on their life jackets. In the meantime, they wait for instructions that are slow in coming. And that makes them anxious.

Titanic.

On the bridge, a blue flashing light is spinning frantically and a sharp whistle indicates that something is seriously wrong on the Fantasy of The World. The second mate, still in training, is the only officer on the bridge of the 250,000-ton cruise ship with seven and a half thousand passengers on board

that is en route to Rome. The captain and first officer left the wheelhouse half an hour ago and are free because this part of the route is known to be quiet and so they could hand over command to the young officer.

And the young officer sees to his horror on the radar that a vessel is on a collision course and immediately scans the sea with his binoculars in search of the vessel in question. He presses the alarm button and the horn sounds three times and long. Major alarm. Such incidents are not uncommon in this part of the sea, which is busy with tourist boats, but what worries him is the fact that the skipper of this boat does not respond to previously sent warning signals that are automatically sent in such cases.

After sounding the ship's horn and again seeing no response, the first officer, who has now arrived in the wheelhouse with his shirt still hanging out of his pants, immediately decides to change course. The enormous ship is equipped with extremely modern and very powerful engines and thus prevents a collision with the sailboat that is sailing with only the jib rolled out. The staff on board the cruise ship was informed with some delay and then reassured the guests. A little later the captain, dressed in bright yellow swimming trunks and a Hawaiian shirt, storms into the wheelhouse and after being informed of the situation and shouting orders, he calls the second mate and angrily reprimands him.

"Three long blasts is an emergency, a series of short blasts is a danger of collision. Dick!" the captain shouts, saluting the first officer and leaving. He slams the door behind him.

After the loudspeakers announce a 'false alarm', the guests are relieved to return to their loungers or to the cocktail bar. They have no idea what is happening. The stern of the enormous cruise ship passed a sailboat at less than twenty metres.

The French coast guard, alerted by the cruise ship's distress call, arrives after fifteen minutes and slowly approaches the twelve-meter classic sailing yacht. There appears to be no one on deck and the autopilot is active. The officers climb aboard and search the cabin, finding that the ship is unmanned. There is no sign of an accident or criminal activity.

They drag it to the port of Nice. The harbor master immediately recognizes the yacht with the name 'BiBi'.

I . The Residents

Large grey cauliflower clouds threaten the lovely-looking village with a rain shower that could last a few hours. People quicken their pace when they look up and do their shopping at high speed. Feverishly, the furniture on the terraces is brought to safety. One of the many vagrants who man the village seems to be unaffected and does not let his daily existence be affected by a few drops of clear rainwater.

This vagrant has been nicknamed George because he looks exactly like a famous French singer with the same first name, who died in 2013. With torn clothes and worn leather shoes without laces, he sits slumped against the wall of the town hall. In front of him on the ground is a can and a cardboard sign on which is written that he is asking for money. He stares ahead with a remarkably cheerful face. Something makes him special, but it is not his fixed smile. It is the eyes in which things are hidden. Things.

Someone with an umbrella in his hand initially walks past him, but turns around and walks back. He starts a conversation that apparently immediately has his interest after a few minutes. He listens attentively and nods understandably.

The vagabond speaks very softly with a noticeable neat accent and looks at the person with his bright blue eyes.

When the person bends down to hear the tramp better, he asks a question to which the tramp starts laughing and gives an answer that takes some time because he not only speaks slowly but also with long pauses. Finally, they shake hands and say goodbye in a particularly charming way with a respectful bow. The person deposits a note in the can and leaves his umbrella against the wall.

The wanderer looks up and sees the sky clouding over with dark clouds gathering and threatening a rain shower. The first drop announces the rest.

He gets up with difficulty, stretches his back and walks to a tree where it is only dry for a moment until even the leaves can no longer protect him. He hesitates whether to go to his hiding place in the forest or to wait a little longer until the storm is over. So there are still nice people who give fifty euros and a nice umbrella to strangers, he thinks as he looks approvingly at the mechanism of the umbrella. He had almost forgotten what such a thing was meant for and unfolds it and decides to leave because he is tired.

Humming the melody of 'Le metequé' he seems to be dancing in the rain. A little later he arrives at his shelter, which he made himself from plastic sheets and other materials that he has collected over the years. The shelter is still tolerated by the municipality but he has received an announcement that it will be of limited duration.

Inside he counts the day's harvest and contentedly crawls to a corner of the hut where a few old blankets lie. He takes off his coat and shoes, clutches his chest with a pained face. Then the pain goes away and he lies down and quickly falls asleep. The rain has stopped and nature exudes a wonderfully spicy scent.