

ADDITIONAL IDEAS – SIMON

These are additional ideas, elaborations on Simon's initial actions that might make him seem more "heroic."

INITIAL DISCOVERY OF BODY: A certain disarrangement of the room leads both Murdoch and Sir G to conclude Lady F's death is the result of a botched burglary. Simon however sees beneath the surface and is able to detect the "painterly" quality to the disorder – it is a "composition" of a burgled residence, and Lady F is "composed" as a murdered corpse. This leads Simon to suspect a certain madness or obsession in the perpetrator. Hints will be dropped for Sir G, Rothschild, and Talbot suggesting either an "artist's eye," an appreciation of art, or an obsessive attention to detail.

PURSUIT OF JOSEPH WINKEEP, THE GARDEN BOY: Simon mulls over testimony from servants, largely predictable and uninteresting. He remembers hearing that the garden boy had disappeared the day Lady F's body was found. Was it a coincidence? Simon was told the boy had a harsh master, and he might have fled his beatings. Still, Simon doesn't like coincidences. He uses the excuse of a family outing into the countryside on his day off to track down the child. This puts him in conflict with Rebecca, who blames him for inattention to the family; and also accesses his guilt about choosing to work on the day Rachel went into labor and eventually died. However, it also shows his dogged determination and perfectionism, as well as his superb intuition.

Joseph's revelation that he was a frequent channel of communication between Talbot and Lady F raises suspicions in Simon's mind. Why hadn't Talbot disclosed the true nature of their relationship, and in fact had misled Simon into believing it was much more superficial? This points a spotlight on Talbot. However, when Simon confronts him, Talbot is able to offer an innocuous explanation about personal intimacies with Lady F which he did not wish to mention for fear of sullyng her reputation. Thus Wise is shown as alert to all possibilities, but for the moment derailed by Talbot's lie.

INVESTIGATION OF SIR G'S UNDERWORLD DEALINGS: Beginning with the discovery of Sir G's debts, Simon tenaciously unravels his role in a nefarious race track scam, involving not only shady con-men but implicating one of the best detectives on the police force. This line of investigation leads Simon deeper and deeper into a dangerous criminal world in the Holy Land (St. Giles). At one point he is attacked and severely beaten by henchmen of the swindlers who do not want their scheme exposed. Simon defends himself ably and shows himself to be bold and courageous. This scene would also show him in a more physically active and aggressive light.

BREAKING OF SIR G'S ALIBI FOR THE NIGHT OF LADY F'S DEATH: Sir G maintains he spent that night at his club. The doorman initially supports this story. However, Simon has learned from an offhand remark of Dr. Baumgarten that Sir G was seen climbing into a hansom and heading toward the Haymarket district at the very time he claimed to be at the club. Since this is a very casual comment, Simon will have to be

ingenious to figure out the discrepancy. Then, through clever questioning, Simon is able to break the doorman's alibi. Sir G remains unwilling to admit anything. Simon follows him, and discovers his liaison with Arabella. Simon confronts the two of them, which directly violates Victorian convention of "two worlds," by exposing Sir G's double life. This exposure, as much as the breaking of his alibi, infuriates Sir G, leading to more hostility between him and Simon.

UNCOVERING OF SIR G'S DEBT SITUATION: This clue is handed to Simon by Rothschild, so it is not impressive. However, Simon follows up a generic piece of information (the man is in debt and tapping all resources for money) in a persistent way which leads him to discover the racing scandal, which Rothschild knows nothing about. Further, Simon's skepticism causes him to realize that Rothschild is deflecting attention away from himself through this disclosure, which causes Simon to look at him as a suspect even more closely. Thus Simon is not "fooled" by Rothschild's strategy.

PROBING OF ARABELLA: Simon does more thinking about Arabella. Why did she leave the military town to come to London? How did she meet Sir G? How is it that she seems to have some sort of hold over him? Again, Simon is able to penetrate the surface of things, and senses that this is more than a casual relationship. His dogged persistence and strong instincts enables him to expose her secret, the patrimony of little Reggie. He could have her followed, or put together the pieces of the puzzle through odd remarks made by Kate Hamilton.

SUSPICIONS OF BRANTLEY: Simon and his family will have prior acquaintance with Dr. Talbot, both as physician to Emily, friend of the family, and burgeoning lover of Rebecca. However, Simon is only dimly aware of Brantley, and has never met him. When he does encounter him at Talbot's Institute, he is disturbed by the relationship between master and assistant. To others, Brantley appears a grateful subordinate, and Wise the benevolent mentor, but Simon senses deeper and more complex undercurrents. Specifically, he observes an intimacy between the two men which he interprets as Brantley not knowing his place, and Talbot allowing him liberties (but which really derives from Brantley sharing so many of Talbot's devastating secrets). This interpretation of Brantley as ambitious and domineering makes Simon willing to consider his involvement in the baby deaths when he is implicated by the midwife Catherine Martin. Another possibility is to revive Brantley's infatuation with Lady F, thus making him a potential suspect in her murder. In this scenario, Brantley would somehow declare his devotion to Lady F, and when she rejected him in horror, attacked her. The problem with this is it might clutter the pot with yet another suspect.

DISCOVERY OF LADY F'S SECRET LIFE AS A MUCKRAKING JOURNALIST: There will be several tantalizing hints that Lady F led a secret life. Professor Maximus will refer to her at times "disappearing down a rabbit hole, like Alice." Other people will also allude to her disappearing, sometimes for days at a time. But no one, not even Lady Penelope, knows exactly what she was up to, so no one can tell Simon. Instead, through tenacious detective work, he is able to discover: 1) As the mysterious AB, Lady F did an expose several years before on "bent" midwives, who for a fee conveniently disposed of

poor mothers' unwanted children 2) At the time of her death, she was engaged in an investigation of Dr. Talbot, and had discovered damning information about his Institute. Thus Simon is able to independently come to the conclusion that Talbot may well be the real murderer, but not quickly enough to prevent the abduction of his daughters. However, this legwork means he no longer has to wait for Talbot to explain things to him; he has figured out Talbot's culpability through his own ingenuity.

ROLE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Simon believes in his instincts, but he also believes in using available technology to provide evidence in his cases. One such technology is the use of plaster of Paris casts to document footprints. Unfortunately, in this case this leads him on a wild goose chase after Arabella. His other fascination is with photography. Although it was not standard practice to photograph crime scenes, Simon often employs the services of a rather bizarre individual, Theo Maximus, who also happens to be a photographic genius. Simon likes "immortalizing" the crime scene so he can ponder it exhaustively. His use of Maximus brings him into conflict with Walker, who disapproves of the practice and is reluctant to approve payment for the photographer. It also brings Simon into intense conflict with Sir G, who is horrified at the idea of his wife's body being photographed and tries to forbid it. Simon overrides him, in a way that shows his willingness to confront powerful authority figures.

Later, these photographs will reveal important clues about the crime. One possibility is that Simon could see something in the pictures linking Sir F to Rothschild. For example, using a magnifying lens, Simon could discover that a cane in the umbrella stand has the Rothschild crest on it. Or he could notice that an expensive pendant around Lady F's neck is actually a six-pointed Jewish star (the problem with this is that it might look bad that Simon didn't notice this at the time he inspected the body). Another possibility is that the photos contain a clue leading Simon to Lady F's secret identity. For example, he could notice an out-of-place collection of old newspapers on the bookshelf that contain stories under the AB byline.

SIMON'S INVESTIGATION OF ROTHSCHILD: Whereas Simon loathes and despises Sir G, he is much more ambivalent about Rothschild. In fact, Rothschild in some respects is the epitome of everything to which Simon aspires – the perfectly assimilated and highly successful Jew. Therefore, a large part of him does not want Rothschild to be implicated in the Fairhaven crime. Yet he is too good a detective not to catch discrepancies in Rothschild's story. For example, he discovers that whereas Rothschild claimed to have escorted Lady F to her door and then returned home himself, in fact he secretly visited her the night of her death using the garden door. Simon is rankled by Rothschild's glib assertion that the servants will back him up, so he does question each and every one of them, pressing, prodding, looking for the contradictions. He could end up interviewing James, making James think he is being looked at as a suspect, and then using this leverage, force James to admit that he inadvertently observed Rothschild entering the garden). Maximus might also be connected with, or have associates involved in child pornography, and could innocently disclose information that leads Simon to discover 1) Rothschild's participation in both child pornography and pedophilia 2) Lady F's awareness of these predilections and Rothschild's fear that she was about to

expose him. (My concern about Rothschild having a terribly shameful secret is that I have some reluctance to cast a Jewish character in such a negative light. We need to talk about this).

Whereas Simon hopes the murderer is Sir G, Walker, an anti-semitic, would like nothing better than to convict Rothschild. This leads to considerable tension between Simon and his supervisor, which shows Simon's willingness to challenge an authority figure he believes is both prejudiced and motivated by politics rather than evidence. Sir G complains on several occasions to Walker about Simon's persecution of him. In turn, Walker accuses Simon of favoring "his own."

SIMON'S PURSUIT OF TALBOT AND HIS KIDNAPPED DAUGHTERS: Here Simon is able to demonstrate his strong intuitive sense in deducing where Talbot has taken the girls, when no one else can figure this out (I don't know exactly where it will be, but it will be a place with some special, symbolic meaning for him and Rebecca. Simon will have to climb into Talbot's mind at this point, to reason like him, to be able to figure this out). Simon will continue to show his understanding of Talbot by refusing to have a phalanx of policemen accompanying him, as Walker suggests. Instead, he knows if he approaches Talbot in a peaceable manner, while putting himself at greater personal risk, it is less likely Talbot will panic and kill the girls. In the end, Simon will overpower Talbot, while Rebecca protects Emily, again showing a physicality and willingness to use force.