**Lecture: 6**

**Reading and analysis**

**Episode 5**

Coke listened for several seconds but he could not hear anything at all. And yet there was smoke coming from the chimney and there was a light on in the front room! "Why is it so quiet? Is it a trap? Are the police waiting for me in there?" he asked himself. He went to the front door and pushed it. To his surprise it was open! He went in very quietly. 5 In the front room there was a fire burning in the fireplace.

The room was clean, small and very warm. There was very little furniture in it-only a couch and a table in front of the fire and two old-fashioned chairs." There were also some photographs on the shelf above the fire. They were yellow and old. One of them was of a young man in a World

10 War I uniform. There were also a few of the same young man and also a woman in old-fashioned wedding-clothes. Suddenly Coke froze. There was someone else in the room. He knew it. He could feel it! He turned around quickly and. at the same time. put his hand in his pocket. There was a small knife there. He saw an old woman. She had a covered dish in her hands and

there was a delicious smell of meat and vegetables coming from it. She did not look afraid. She did not even look surprised.

"I'm sorry," she said, and put the dish down on the table. Coke could hardly believe his ears. Here he was. a stranger in her house and yet she said she was sorry! "I'm sorry." she said again. "I didn't hear you. Did you knock? I'm deaf, you see." She pointed to her ear. shook her head and said "deaf" a second time. "People often come to the door and knock, but I don't hear them. I'm glad you came in." Coke stared at her for a second and then finally found his voice. "I ... I'm sorry. I just stepped in."

He looked down at his clothes. His prison uniform was so dirty that it was impossible to tell what kind of uniform it was. Then he suddenly had an idea. "I'm a mechanic from a garage in town. I came to repair a lorry somewhere out here but the road was icy. I had an accident. I ... I fell off my motorbike." He had to say this several times before she finally understood him. when she did. She gave him some hot water and soap and afterwards 35 some food. The only thing he needed now was a change of clothes!

**Episode 6**

It was a cold and miserable night. Only a few miles away from the house Coke was in, two policemen in a small village police station could hear the wind outside. One of them was a sergeant. The other was much younger. "I wonder how Mrs Bentley is?" the sergeant asked.

''Mrs Bentley? Oh. you mean that old lady whose husband died a few years ago?" "That's right. She's deaf, you know, so she never listens to the radio or watches television. In fact, she doesn't even read the papers." "Oh?" the young policeman said. He wondered why the sergeant wanted to tell him all this. Then he found out. "Why don't you go out to her place and see if she's all right?" "Who? Me? 'On a night like this?" "It's not far. Besides, you've got your bike, haven't you?" Baxter got off the train at a small station. There was a detective waiting for him on the

platform. He shook Baxter's hand. "My name's Halls. Tom Halls. Scotland Yard phoned us and told us to meet you here. There's a car waiting." Baxter wasted very little time on social formalities.

"Coke escaped more than 24 hours ago. I want to catch him before another 24 hours are up."

Halls looked at Baxter for a few seconds before he answered. "A lot of us wonder why Scotland Yard is so interested in this fellow Coke. He isn't the first one to escape. Another man did only about six months ago. but Scotland Yard didn't send anyone to help us then." Baxter was already half-way to the car before he said anything.

"Coke isn't just an ordinary prisoner. He's very special. Let's get going!" The young policeman was angry. He was on the road now. The wind was cold and blew snow into his face. "That stupid sergeant!" he thought. "We must be one of the last stations in England that still uses bikes, and he sends me out on one on a night like this!" He had to get off the bike and push it up a hill. It was the last hill between the station and the old lady's house. When he got to the top of it he could see the house down below, at the bottom of the hill. Just as he looked down at it, he saw a light go on in one of the rooms upstairs. "Stupid! That's what it is, sending me out on a night like this!" the policeman said again. Then he got on his bike and began to go down the hill very fast,

towards the house.