

Marreau and the Chocolate Policeman

A detective comedy by Robert Farrow in two acts.

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The original Marreau adventure. 3rd Edition.

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Dramatis Personae

Marreau	The famous continental detective
Gwendolyn	His secretary
Simpson	His friend
Bertie	Eldest son of Lady Eustace
Edward	Second son of Lady Eustace
Isabel	Edward's wife
Lady Jane	Daughter of Lady Eustace
Major Trubolt	Cousin of the Eustaces & family friend
Angela	His wife
Dr. Protheroe	The family doctor
Cummings	The Butler
Mrs. Farley	The Cook
Vincent	The Valet
Daisy	The Maid
Sgt. Farmer	A country policeman

Act I Scene 1

*A room in a country house, period sometime between 1920 and 1940.
The famous continental detective - Marreau is sitting reading his paper.
His friend Simpson is idly peering through the window.
His secretary Gwendolyn Bayne is going through some letters at the table.
There is also a settee, clock and general furnishings.
{Marreau speaks with an appalling French accent}*

There are a few moments of silence, broken occasionally by the rustle of Marreau's paper.

Simpson Dashed strange don't you think ?

Marreau {lifting head from newspaper} What ? What are you talking about now Simpson

Simpson Lemmings.

Marreau Lemmings ?

Simpson Yes the way they jump off cliffs for no apparent reason. Dashed weird don't you think.

Marreau It is a mite peculiar I'll give you that.

Simpson I suppose they have got a reason. Trying to fly or something, I should imagine.

Gwend: {with heavy sarcasm} Probably been talking to you more like.

Simpson What ? Oh yes I see - very witty.

Gwend: Urm.

Simpson You wouldn't be much good as a lemming would you Marreau

Marreau I'm sorry I don't catch your slide

Simpson Catch my what

Gwend: I think he means drift. He doesn't catch your drift.

Marreau Indeed - thank-you my dear. I do not catch your drift.

Simpson Well I mean, not much call for a private investigator, if everyone commits suicide anyway. I mean murdering a lemming would be sort of doing it a favour really. Saving it some time. Not having to run all that way to the cliff.

Marreau Quite. However if I were a lemming I think I would probably be more suited to Social Work. Or a Doctor perhaps - specialising in broken bones.

Gwend: My God - I've heard some pretty idiotic conversations before. But "What I'd do if I were a lemming" has got to take first prize. Anyway Marreau, I was somewhat surprised at your taking up Lady Eustace's invitation for a shooting weekend. Especially as you can't shoot.

Marreau Marreau is an excellent shot.

Gwend: If I were a pheasant I'd have to agree. I'd much rather have you shooting at me than - for example - someone who keeps his eyes open when he shoots !

Marreau You are well aware my dear, that I disapprove of murder. And to me the - how you say - bagging of defenceless galliforms falls into that category. I miss on purpose

[A SHOT IS HEARD OFFSTAGE]

Marreau What was that ?

Simpson Sounded like a shot to me.

Marreau That was what was known as a rhetorical question.

Simpson Still sounded like a shot to me.

Gwend: He meant that he knew it was a - Oh what's the point.

Marreau Precisely. Of course it was a shot, and from the report, I would say that it was a twelve-bore shotgun, using Eley Alphamax cartridges, fired from a Grembling's over & under mach 37 B.

Simpson Gosh Marreau ! How can you be so precise ?

Marreau Experience, pure experience. And intelligence of course. Self-denial of common comforts. The selfless study of man's methods of killing. A knowledge of shotguns since 1842. The ability to differentiate the smell of 196 types of gunpowder, and the memorising of the report volumes of the worlds 835 most popular sporting guns.

Simpson Wow !

Gwend: Don't you think we ought to go and see who's shot what.

Simpson Oh, probably just a late pheasant.

Gwend: Very late I'd say. It has gone midnight.

Simpson Crikey, the chap must have pretty keen eyesight !

Gwend: Have you got a brain ?

Marreau Enough of this banter. Marreau will investigate.

{ *Cummings, the Butler enters - distraught* }

Cummings The most dreadful thing - the most dreadful, dreadful thing.

Marreau Out with it Cummings.

Cummings Lady Eustace - she's been accidentally shot !

Marreau Shot !

Gwend: God !

Simpson What ?

Cummings With her revolver.

Marreau & Simpson [*together*] Revolver !

Gwend: Better make it 836 popular guns Marreau.

Marreau Hmph. Is she dead ?

Cummings Yes - very.

Gwend: { *waspishly* } I wasn't aware there were degrees of death ! Sure she isn't just slightly dead ?

Cummings Oh no ! She's very dead indeed.

Marreau How did it happen ?

Cummings Well she appears to have been cleaning her revolver, when she accidentally shot herself - up the nose.

Gwend: Up the nose ?

Cummings Yes it would seem that the bullet went straight up her left nostril. Not a pretty sight !

Gwend: Yuk.

{ *Simpson is sick behind the aspidistra* }

Marreau Marreau will investigate. I will go and view the body.

Cummings No need, they're dragging her in here now.

Marreau No ! No !! NO !!! Do not move the body -

{ *Marreau dashes offstage, followed by Cummings* }

{ After a pause }

Gwend: Oh stop being sick Simpson.

Simpson Sorry Gwend. but I've this terribly weak - { *dives behind aspid. again* }

{ *Marreau re-enters, accompanied by Dr. Protheroe, Major Trubolt, with his wife Angela and Isabel who is sobbing buckets* }

Trubolt Ghastly business.

Dr.Proth Ghastly

Angela Not at all nice.

Isabel { Sob }

Angela Pull yourself together Isabel ! { *She slaps **Isabel** across face - **Isabel** disintegrates into floods* }

{ *Another batch of people enter - Cummings with the cook, Mrs Farley who is comforting the sobbing maid, Daisy, followed by Vincent the Valet.
After them come Bertie, Edward and Lady Jane.
All characters cluster around Marreau* }

Marreau Out ! Out !! OUT !!! Marreau cannot investigate when the place is full of people. I need room to exercise my little red cells.

{ *All those who have just entered leave, except Marreau, Simpson & Gwend:* }

Simpson Grey, Marreau.

Marreau What

Simpson Little grey cells, not red.

Marreau Simpson, when you have seen as many brains as I have, you will agree that the little cells are definitely red.

Simpson But

Gwend: Don't bother Simpson, you should know by now that Monsieur Marreau is always right. Well Marreau - who killed her then.

Marreau Killed ? Oh you are suggesting that Lady Eustace's death was not an accident.

Gwend: Come on Marreau. You know that Lady Eustace is - was the President of the British Grouse Slayers Association, and abhorred all hand guns, considering the shotgun to be the only decent weapon with which to despatch our fellow creatures. Why on earth should she be cleaning a revolver.

Simpson Perhaps she was cleaning it for a friend.

Gwend: Yes Simpson. Very likely.

Marreau Indeed, my dear Gwendolyn. You have followed my train of thought precisely. Lady Eustace was murdered - by somebody who owns - A REVOLVER !

Gwend: Brilliant Marreau, I don't know how you do it.

Marreau Experience my dear Gwendolyn. Simply experience. That and.....

Gwend: Yes, you've told us all that once already.

Simpson Oh let him go on. I think he's dashed clever.

Gwend: You would. Well how about it Marreau. Who d'you reckon did it.

Marreau Marreau does not jump to conclusions. She may have been cleaning it for a friend.

Simpson I said that !

Gwend: I give up ! Look lets examine the facts, Lady Eustace is shot at very close range with a revolver - a weapon she despises, and yet appears to have been cleaning.
The Butler is not at all surprised to find her in possession of said revolv...

Marreau That is it. Of course. The Butler did it.

Gwend: Hold on Marreau. Don't you think we'd better ask him a few questions first.

Marreau Yes I will soon get him to admit that he is the murderer. The man has not yet been born who can outwit Hemlock Marreau.

Gwend: { *under her breath* } Man possibly not - Woman

Marreau Simpson, go and fetch the rascal.
{ *Simpson exits* }

Gwend: I hope you'll be tactful.

Marreau Marreau is the embodiment of tact. Discretion is my watch-word.

{ *Simpson re-enters with Cummings* }

Cummings How can I help you sir.

Marreau You are perhaps not aware that I am Marreau...

Simpson The great French detective.

Gwend: Belgian

Marreau Luxembourg actually.

Cummings Yes sir, I have followed your cases with interest.

Marreau You are no doubt aware then, that I always find the guilty party, no matter how cleverly they attempt to cover their tracks.

Cummings { *nervously* } Yes Sir.

Marreau Why did you kill Lady Eustace ?

Gwend: { *under her breath* } Very tactful !

Cummings What ?! I didn't !

Marreau Yes you did. No point denying it. You shot her. Take him away Simpson.

{ *Simpson moves to grab Cummings* }

Cummings But I was nowhere near her when she was shot.

Marreau Don't believe you !

{ *Simpson tries to drag the struggling cummings offstage* }

Gwend: Hold on Marreau, Simpson put him down, could I ask a few questions.

Marreau By all means - but it's pointless. He's as guilty as.....

Gwend: Cummings will you please explain, what you were doing when Lady Eustace was shot.

Cummings I was in the kitchen helping Mrs Farley shell the peas.....

Marreau Very likely

Cummings When all of a sudden we heard this shot. Mrs Farley said "What was that" and I said "Sounded like a shot to me", and then she said something about a rhetorical question, and said I'd better go and see what was going on.

Gwend: Is it usual for you and Mrs Farley to shell peas together at midnight ?

Cummings Ur, well not usual exactly, but we thought it would save some time in the morning.

Gwend: I see. What did you do next ?

Cummings Well I dashed upstairs, and saw Daisy who was looking a bit dazed, and asked her if she'd heard the shot. She said she thought it had come from the gun room.

Simpson Good place for a shot to come from ! What ! Ha ha !

Gwend: Shut up Simpson - Carry on Cummings.

Cummings So I ran to the gun room and there was Lady Eustace looking not at all well.

Gwend: Not well ?

Cummings Well dead really. Protheroe was examining her. She'd been shot with her revolver.

Gwend: { *with emphasis* } Her revolver ?

Cummings Yes. Why ?

Gwend: It is a well known fact that Lady Eustace considered revolvers to be the work of the Devil. Well ? Can you explain ?

Cummings Ah ! Yes, I'd forgotten that - damn !

Marreau So - I have found the flaw in your alibi.

Gwend: You'd forgotten it. How long have you worked for Lady Eustace ?

Cummings Forty-two years, I know it sounds a bit unlikely for me to forget, but it was the heat of the moment. I just jumped to the wrong conclusion. What with all that gun cleaning equipment round her, and her holding the gun. I just put two and two together.

Gwend: So what do you think now ?

Cummings I suppose someone shot her.

Marreau And that someone was you !

Cummings No. Mrs Farley will back me up.

Gwend: We will question Mrs Farley later. Meanwhile you mustn't speak to her, or anyone else, about this matter. Go and do something in the Billiard Room. Go with him Simpson and then go and get Mrs. Farley.

{ *Simpson and Cummings exit* }

Marreau Open and shut case really. No doubt about it.

Gwend: Oh yes ? Who did it then ?

Marreau Well Cummings of course. Shelling peas indeed ! You don't honestly think that they'd be shelling peas in the middle of night - do you !

Gwend: Of course they weren't

Marreau So he was shooting her.

Gwend: { *laughs* } Lady Eustace ? Not a chance.

Marreau But...

{ *Simpson re-enters with Mrs Farley* }

Gwend: Ah Mrs Farley, do sit down.

Marreau I am Hemlock Marreau

Mrs.Farley The great Belgian detective ?

Gwend: Luxembourg

Marreau French actually

Gwend: What were you doing when you heard the shot ?

Mrs.Farley I was preparing carrots with Mr. Cummings.

Marreau { *going somewhat crazy* } Aha, now its carrots. First it was peas, now it's carrots, next it'll be turnips and we'll probably finish off with a couple of aubergines. Have you any other surprise vegetables which you intend to spring on us. Eh. Come-on you cannot fool Marreau, were you preparing any other vegetables for our delectation tomorrow.

Mrs.Farley { *quaveringly* } Yes sir.

Marreau Aha now we're getting to it. Well ?

Mrs.Farley Marrow

Marreau Yes ! What ? Come on don't hide anything it's not worth it. What was this secretive vegetable....

Mrs.Farley Marrow, that was the other vegetable.

Marreau { *loosing all control* } WHAT WAS !!

Gwend: Calm down Hemlock, the other vegetable was Marrow, you know long thick green thing. Rather nice stuffed with mincemeat, or served in cubes in an onion sauce.

Marreau Ah. Sacre Bleu. Your stupid English Language. Fancy naming a vegetable after a great detective. Huh !

Simpson I think the vegetable came first, Marreau.

Gwend: Are you married Mrs Farley ?

Mrs.Farley I'm a widow

Gwend: And Mr. Cummings, is he married.

Mrs.Farley No.

Gwend: So there's no reason to hide the fact that you two are having an affair.

Mrs.Farley No but.. Oh, I didn't. Oh I shouldn't have...

Marreau But you did. So you are covering for Cummings with this imbecile story about the peas.

Mrs.Farley Peas ?

Gwend: Carrots.

Mrs.Farley Oh, did he say peas. I told him to say carrots.

Marreau Well if that is not an admission of guilt I don't know what is. So you killed Lady Eustace, and have persuaded your lover, Cummings to say he was shelling carrots with you - at midnight.

Mrs.Farley No. Kill Lady Eustace, when our livelihoods depended on the old bag staying alive as long as possible !

Simpson "The old bag" ? I say, that's not a very nice way to talk about the deceased.

Gwend: Why do you say that your livelihoods depended on her staying alive.

Mrs.Farley Well, young Bertie stands to inherit the estate, and he has never liked either Clarence or myself.

Marreau Clarence ?

Mrs.Farley Mr Cummings. No he's never liked us ever since we washed his mouth out with soap and water for calling Mr Cummings an old..

Gwend: I see. So in fact, neither of you had any motive for killing Lady Eustace, and in fact stood to lose by her death.

Marreau So why did you make up the preposterous story about the peas.

Gwend: I'll explain that to you later Marreau. Mrs Farley, did anyone in your opinion hold a grudge against her ladyship. Did anyone have a motive for killing her ?

Mrs.Farley I'd say they did.

Marreau Who ? Come-on none of this loyalty-to-the family business. Who had reason enough to - how you say - bump her off.

Mrs.Farley All of them

Marreau & Simpson [*together*] What ?

Mrs.Farley Oh yes. They all hated the old bag, but didn't dare cross her in case they got missed out of the will. But she just kept on hangin' on. The amount of times she avoided being blasted - accidentally like - when out on the shoots was legendary. Dr. Protheroe used to call her "The old cat" coz. she'd got so many lives.

Marreau Ah but there's someone who's above suspicion, Dr. Protheroe, he couldn't stand to gain from the will, and had saved her life on a couple of occasions so I believe.

Mrs.Farley Only coz. 'e 'ad to. Would 'ave looked a bit fishy if she'd died of buckshot wounds to the bum - not usually fatal you know ! No she had something on 'im as well. Don't know what it was, but she'd got summat on 'im.

Marreau What about the others ? Surely they didn't all have motives ?

Mrs.Farley Everyone of 'em. Even little Jimmy.

Simpson Little Jimmy ? But he's only thirteen. What possible motive could a thirteen-year-old boy have for killing his grandmother ?

Mrs.Farley She strangled his pet hamster for one thing

Gwend: Oh poor little Jimmy

Marreau Poor little 'amster ! Why did she do that ?

Mrs.Farley Coz. 'is exercise wheel was making too much noise. And she used 'is rabbit for target practice.

Marreau The monster. I am beginning to feel some sympathy for the murderer, especially if it was little Jimmy.

Gwend: Yes, but as it is highly unlikely that little Jimmy did in fact do the murder - especially as he's in Switzerland at the moment - I think it might be more useful to find out the more likely candidates.

Mrs.Farley { *happy to drop everybody in it* } Well as I said, Bertie stands to inherit the estate. Edward his younger brother will get MacTallach Castle in Scotland, Lady Jane will be free to marry her mystery lover...

Simpson Hold on a moment. Who is this mystery lover ?

Mrs.Farley Well if I knew that it wouldn't be a mystery - { *to Gwendolyn* } is he a bit thick.

Gwend: A lot actually, carry on Mrs Farley.

Mrs.Farley Major Trubolt, her nephew, will probably get a good bit of money, which considering his gambling debts, could come in very useful.

Simpson I say, I was in the army with Trubolt. The most upright upstanding character I've ever met. I never knew him to gamble, and he certainly wouldn't kill anyone - well not without giving them a sporting chance to get him first.

Gwend: How on earth did you get on in the army with your iffy stomach ?

Simpson I used to carry a lot of bicarb.

Marreau We are straying from the subject. The little red cells are working overtime - Do not clutter my brain with inconsequentialities, or I am liable to start thinking that bicarbonate of soda plays a crucial role in this murder.

Gwend: You're right Marreau. We are wasting time, somebody in this house murdered Lady Eustace, and ... by the way, the police are taking their time getting here.

Simpson Police ?

Gwend: Yes you know, tall men with pointy hats and dark blue suits.

Simpson I wish you'd stop talking to me like I was an idiot Gwendolyn, I do know what a policeman looks like - I just wondered what the police had got to do with it.

Gwend: The reason I talk to you like you were an idiot, is because you are an idiot. Someone has been murdered, by having their nose, and other useful bits of their head shot off. This - like it or not - is usually considered to be the sort of thing the Police like to be told about. Now presumably someone has phoned the local Police station, and a bicycle is hurrying at this very moment to the scene - correct ?

Simpson Well no, they haven't got a phone. Or to be more precise, they have got a phone but it isn't working. In fact the phone probably is working, but the lines have been cut.

Marreau You thought this piece of information too trivial to tell us before, no doubt ?

Simpson I forgot. Dash it all, Marreau, a chap can't be expected to remember everything.

Gwend: Your name appears to be the limit of your ability.

Simpson Gwenders...

Gwend: And don't call me Gwenders ! Gwend is bad enough, but Gwenders - ugh.

Marreau Well Mrs Farley, you've been very helpful. I think you can go now. Would you ask Daisy to come in please..

{ *Mrs Farley exits* }

Simpson Sorry Marreau. Should have thought.

Gwend: We don't ask the impossible Simpson. Relaying the piece of information would have been quite sufficient. No need for any thought processes to be involved.

Simpson I'm going to go home in a minute ! I'm doing my best !

Gwend: Heaven help us if you ever do your worst.

Simpson Tell her to stop picking on me Marreau, will you.

Marreau Yes Gwendolyn, leave him alone. He can't help it if he has the brain power normally associated with the simpler fungi.

Simpson Marreau, I'm hurt.

Marreau Well get in your little car and point it in the direction of the nearest town and see if you can locate a policeman

Gwend: { *teasingly* } There's a good mushroom.

Marreau Tell him what has happened, and inform him the The Great Marreau is on the job !

Simpson Oh alright. Good thing I can drive, what.

M&Gwend: Um

Marreau And pick up a packet of boiled sweets in the village would you.

Simpson Righty-ho !

{ *Simpson exits* }

Gwend: You shouldn't have said that Marreau.

Marreau I know. I was a bit harsh on him.

Gwend: No not that. You shouldn't have asked him to get the boiled sweets. He'll probably tell the woman at the corner shop about the murder, and buy half a pound of chocolate policemen.

Marreau Oh he wouldn't would he

Gwend: He would

Marreau He might. Oh well we'll see what happens. By the time the police arrive I should have this case all sewn up.

Gwend: With Simpson getting the police....Besides, where d'you expect him to get boiled sweets from at one o'clock in the morning

Marreau Ah. I hadn't thought of that.

{ Daisy (the maid) enters }

Marreau Come in Daisy, don't be frightened. There's nothing to worry about. Provided you didn't murder her ladyship.

Daisy I didn't. I never. Honest. I wasn't there. I didn't see nuffink. He's lying if 'e said I did. I didn't kill 'er. I know 'e saw me touch the gun but I just touched it see. I didn't shoot it. Honest. It wasn't me. I don't know who it was. I didn't see him. Well only 'is back. And not for long. Just comin' out the room 'e was. I couldn't say as 'e did it. Well not for sure. Though it was 'is back and I....

Gwend: Whose back Daisy ?

Marreau Cummings ?

Daisy Cummings ? No. Master E...

Gwend: Master Edward ?

Daisy I only saw 'is back, could a been anyone, but it was 'is jacket alright.

Marreau Master Edward hey. Well that confirms my suspicions. I think we'd better have a word with that young man. Just one more question Daisy, where did Cummings come from after the shot was fired.

Daisy Up the stairs from the kitchen. He comes rushing up and asks me where the shot came from, and I told 'im the gun room, and he went running off to find the body.

Gwend: Alright thank-you Daisy. Oh you say you recognized Master Edward's jacket. What does it look like ?

Daisy Oh its a sort-of blazer thing. Dark blue wiv thin red stripes down it. I'd recognize it anywhere. Can I go now ?

Gwend: Yes thank-you Daisy, you've been very helpful.

Marreau Time for a word with Master Edward I think.

Gwend: In the morning Marreau, I'm whacked.

Marreau Very well, I will recharge my little red cells. Early start though.

{Lights down - End of scene 1}

Act I Scene 2

Scene: The same. Lights raise. Master Edward is sitting nervously on the edge of his seat. Gwendolyn is also seated but is far more relaxed. Marreau is pacing. It is early morning.

Marreau So you claim that your jacket has been missing for several days.

Edward Er-yes, Tuesday I think I last saw it. Can't be sure. But I certainly haven't worn it in the last couple of days.

Marreau Very convenient. Do your clothes often go missing. For instance is there any other item which has mysteriously vanished in the last few weeks ?

Edward Funny you should say that,..

Marreau Oh Yes ?

Edward Yes, I couldn't find one of my socks this morning. Hunted high and low for the blessed thing. Not a sign.

Marreau You have the other one however ?

Edward Oh yes

Marreau Well to be honest I am inclined not to suspect foul play in the case of the missing sock ! Unless of course our murderer is a unidexter. {*Marreau chuckles to himself*}

Edward A what

Gwend: One-legged. You must excuse Monsieur Marreau's occasionally florid language - He is French

Marreau Belgian actually

Gwend: {*sighs*} Belgian. My mistake. I believe you stand to inherit MacTallach castle, now that her ladyship is no longer with us.

Edward Yes. Crumbling old pile it is too. Nothing but ghosts and draughts. It's about as inviting as the Bastille. Isabel won't go near the place. Gives her the creeps. Mind you most things give Isabel the creeps, this murder's sent her doo-lally

Gwend: How long have you been married to Isabel ?

Edward We married last year actually. Mother never liked her very much. Refused to have her on the shoots. I think it was the way she squeaked every time the guns went off that really annoyed her. Bang - squeak. Bang - squeak. It was pretty annoying I must say. Used to throw the pointers completely. There they were front paw raised, nose pointing compass-like to the quarry and - squeak - threw them completely - thought it was a rat I suppose.

Marreau Very interesting I'm sure, but not really apposite to our enquiries.

Edward No, sorry. I hope you find the boulder that got Mother. I mean I know we had our differences, and all that, but you can't have people going round bagging grannies just because they're objectionable old battle-axes. And I was rather fond of the old thing really. Sort of fixture and fitting, Place certainly won't be the same without her.

Gwend: Who do you think did it.

Edward Oh Gosh, now you're asking. Wouldn't like to say really. Even little Jimmy had a motive.

Marreau Yes we have 'eard about the 'amster

Edward {*mimicking the accent*} The 'amster ? Oh no, I'd forgotten about that. No I was thinking about the way she packs him off to Switzerland to climb mountains, when the poor lad's terrified of heights !

Gwend: As a matter of interest, who's child is Jimmy ?

Edward Ah, sore point there. Bit of a skeleton really.

Gwend: Oh ?

Edward Yes. Well I suppose you'd find out one way or another. Jane had a secret affair with an older man when she was seventeen. And little Jimmy was the result. She's always refused to say who the man was. But I have my suspicions that Mother knew his identity. Though I haven't the foggiest.

Marreau I see and this mystery man was never heard of again ?

Edward Well no, but I think again that was Mother's doing. I believe Jane and the man were rather keen to set-up-shop, so to speak.

Gwend: Is this mystery man the same mystery man who is now her mystery lover ?

Edward I don't know. It's all a bit of a mystery to me.

Marreau Thank-you Master Edward. *{ throwing this line away }* Oh, you realise of course that at the moment you are the prime suspect, so don't go doing anything rash like.....

Edward *{ his affable character changing suddenly }* What ! Me - Suspect.

Marreau Yes of course. Someone about your size, wearing your jacket, hurrying from the scene of the crime. Bit damning really. Wouldn't you say ?

Edward But this is preposterous. I was nowhere near when she was shot.

Marreau Nothing involving vegetables I hope.

Edward What ? No I - I was, um, I was having a bath, that's right.

Marreau Any witnesses ?

Edward I beg your pardon !

Marreau Did anyone see you taking a bath ?

Edward I should dashed-well hope not ! Isabel was in the next room though. She'd have heard me splashing about I suppose.

Marreau Fine, well you've been very helpful. Be a good fellow and don't talk to anyone about this. Go and do something in the Billiard Room, would you.

{ Marreau ushers the somewhat bemused Edward out of the door }

Gwend: *{ contemplatively }* Um

Marreau What do you mean "Um"

Gwend: He's hiding something

Marreau Is he ?

Gwend: Yes, I think we ought to see Isabel and then have another word with him.

Marreau Absolutely. Just what I was going to suggest. Pop and get her would you ?

{ Gwend: exits, leaving Marreau alone }

Marreau *{ thinking aloud }* Think Marreau, what's the link. *{ slowly }* Revolver, hamster, chocolate policemen, bicarbonate of soda

{ Vincent the Valet enters half-way through this line }

Vincent Bicarbonate of soda, sir ? Stomach a bit dicky is it. I'll go and get you some.

Marreau No-no-no, I was simply using my vast experience in the field of criminal methodology to discover the perpetrator of this fiendish murder.

Vincent Oh very good sir. Can I get you anything ?

Marreau No. Yes actually, you could get me some bicarbonate of soda. My stomach's a bit - how you say - dicky.

Vincent *{ Vincent looks heaven-ward }* Very good sir. Will there be anything else.

Marreau No that'll be all for now.

{ Vincent exits, Gwendolyn re-enters, with an agitated Isabel in tow }

Marreau { Marreau suddenly goes starry-eyed } Ah Madame Isabel. Enchante' { He kisses her }

Isabel { Kittenish } Monsieur Marreau, we meet again.

Gwend: { to herself } What ?

Marreau Sit down ma cher, so sorry that this terrible business has upset you so.

Gwend: { amazed } Marreau ?!

Marreau { ignoring Gwend: } Now my dear I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you a few rather unpleasant questions.

Gwend: { indignant } MARREAU !! { She grabs Marreau's arm }

Marreau { to Isabel } Excuse me a moment my dear. { He goes to one side with Gwend: }

{ From this point, to each other in stage whispers }

Yes. What is it. Do you not see that I am engaged in questioning this lady.

Gwend: Do you know her ?

Marreau { with French suavity } Well, you know, we have met.

Gwend: Met ? Do you not think it would be better if I were to question her ?

Marreau You ? Why, I am the Great Marreau, I do not have my secretary asking questions on my behalf.

Gwend: Cut it out Marreau. You know I solve all your cases for you !

Marreau WHAT !! I shall speak to you later, now kindly let me get on with my investigation.
{ Breaks away from Gwend: and returns to Isabel }

Gwend: { fuming } Speak to me later. Hmph !

Marreau I'm sorry about that. Now as I was saying I'm going to have to ask you some rather distressing questions...

Isabel I know you will be as gentle with me as you can

Gwend: Yughk !

Marreau Now then. When Lady Eustace tragically met her death, if it's not too distressing for you.....

Gwend: Get on with it Marreau. { To Isabel } What were you doing when she was shot ?

Isabel Oh I was, er, I was having a bath.

Gwend: That must have been cozy for you

Marreau Gwendolyn !

Isabel I don't understand - I

Marreau What my secretary is referring to, is the fact that Master Edward said he was having a bath when the shot was fired.

Isabel Ah yes that's right, he was. I'd had my bath and was getting ready for bed. I remember hearing him splashing about after I heard the shot.

Marreau Good, well I think that's all I need to know from you my dear sorry to...

Gwend: Hold on Marreau. I would like to ask a few questions...

Marreau Oh very well

Gwend: After you heard the shot, what did you do ?

Isabel Oh, I think I called through the door to Edward, "What was that ?"

Gwend: Was that a rhetorical question ?

Isabel Sorry ?

Gwend: Did you in fact know that it was a shot ?

Isabel Well it sounded like one to me.

Gwend: And what did Master Edward say ?

Isabel I wish people would stop calling him MASTER Edward, he is forty three, and married - to me.

Gwend: Please answer my question, what did he say in reply.

Isabel He didn't

Gwend: Oh ?

Isabel Yes the bath water was running, I suppose he couldn't hear me.

Gwend: So what did happen next

Isabel Well I heard a lot of running about downstairs, and cries of "Up her nose" and the like, and assumed something rather nasty had happened. And then Edward came out of the bathroom in his dressing robe and said he'd go downstairs and find out what was going on.

Gwend: And what did you do ?

Isabel Oh, I got dressed and followed him down. Unfortunately I saw the body and {gulps} Oh it was horrible - and I broke down I'm afraid. I can't really remember much after that.
{She breaks down again}

Gwend: Alright. Thank-you very much. {Marreau comes over to Isabel}

Marreau I am sorry that we have caused you so much distress.
{He shows her to the door, Isabel exits}

Did you have to make her go through all that, she was very upset.

Gwend: She was also lying. And so is he.

Marreau What ?

Gwend: When Master Edward came into this room, not five minutes after the shot was fired, he was fully dressed.

Marreau You are right. So Master Edward did it, and his courageous wife is standing by her husband !

Gwend: {virtually ignoring Marreau} However, it's such a fundamental mistake that I think they're hiding something else. There's certainly something fishy going on.

Marreau So where does that leave us ?

{There is the sound of something being knocked over offstage, and a cry of "Damn", Marreau & Gwend: look at each other and then at the door, Simpson enters}

Simpson Dashed silly place to put an umbrella stand. Hello all. Solved it yet, Marreau ?

Gwend: Have you brought the police ?

Simpson Police ?

Gwend: Oh God ! I knew it !

Simpson Oh no, he's on his way. Cycling over here as fast as he can. You've got to...

Marreau Cycling ? Why did you not bring him in your car ?

Simpson Oh, Gosh, Never thought of that - Sorry.

Gwend: You complete Ohh never mind, I suppose he'll get here eventually..

Simpson {Proffering paper bag} Care for a chocolate policeman ?

[A BLOODCURDLING SCREAM IS HEARD OFFSTAGE]

Marreau What was that ?

Simpson Sounded like a bloodcurdling scream to me

Marreau Yes indeed. And from the pitch and duration, I should say that we will find that Master Edward has been impaled on a croquet mallet.

Simpson Oh come-on Marreau, don't be ridiculous, not even you can detect that sort of detail.

Marreau I will have you know that I have studied.....

{ Cummings rushes in }

Cummings Oh it's horrible - Horrible.

Gwend: What is it Cummings.

Cummings Master Edward -

{ Gwend: & Simpson look at Marreau }

Marreau Yes, go on Cummings -

Cummings He's been impaled on a croquet mallet.

Gwend & Simpson [*together*] What ? { Simpson dives behind the aspidistra }

Marreau Told-you-so

Gwend: I'm impressed Marreau.

Marreau And so is he, it would appear.

Gwend: That pun was in rather bad taste Marreau.

Marreau Murder is in rather bad taste, my dear. I will go and inspect the body. { Marreau exits }

Simpson Well Gwendy what's been happening

Gwend: Gwendy ?? Gwend is bad. Gwenders is worse. Gwendy I will not stand for. Listen Simpson. My name is Gwendolyn Bayne. If Gwendolyn is too taxing for you then call me Miss Bayne. In fact I would prefer it if you didn't call me anything.

Simpson Sorry Gwenders.

Gwend: { exasperated noise }

Simpson Ah, Sorry. Gwendolyn. Anyway what's been going on.

Gwend: There are a lot of people here who are lying very unconvincingly.

Simpson And some who are lying about very dead.

Gwend: True. I wonder who will be next.

Simpson Next ? You think he'll strike again ?

Gwend: Or she !

Simpson Good grief, you don't think it could be a woman doing this surely.

Gwend: Well I had my suspicions, but if Master Edward really has been impaled on a croquet mallet, then she'd have to be pretty strong.

Simpson I suppose it might have been an accident.

Gwend: { Gwend: looks at Simpson as though he is a Martian } { After a considerable pause }

I don't suppose you'd like to paint the scenario, whereby a middle-aged man accidentally impales himself on a croquet mallet, would you ?

Simpson Well; he might have been running along hell-for-leather with his mallet, tripped, and "blurk", so to speak.

Gwend: { Sarcastically } Yes, of course, why didn't I think of that, I'd forgotten how fast you have to run in Croquet.

Simpson Just an idea.

{ *Marreau re-enters, thoughtfully* }

Marreau Very unpleasant. Very unpleasant indeed.

Simpson How did it happen Marreau.

Marreau It would appear that he was running along, tripped and "blurk"

Gwend: I give up ! Call me if anything vaguely realistic happens would you. { *Gwend: exits, moodily* }

Marreau What has got into her ? She's been in a funny mood all day.

Simpson Don't know Marreau. { *Cummings appears at the door, unseen by Marreau or Simpson* }

Marreau I'm going to have another look at the scene of the accident. Coming ?

Cummings Yes Sir. { *Marreau & Simpson look/wheel round to look at Cummings* }

Marreau What ?

Cummings I thought you wanted me sir.

Marreau No, when I want you, I will call you.

Cummings Very good sir. { *under his breath* } stupid French..... { *turns and exits* }

Marreau Come along Simpson, time to use the little red cells, I think.

{Fade lights / Curtain} End of Act I

Act II Scene 1

Scene: The same, Marreau and Simpson are pacing, in opposite directions so that they meet centre-stage, They criss-cross several times. Gwendolyn is sitting on the settee, making notes.

Gwend: Oh for heaven's sake sit down you two. It's like watching the changing of the guard.

Marreau Pacing helps the little red cells.

Gwend: It doesn't help my leedle red zells It's sending me dizzy. You are infuriating at times you know Marreau.

Marreau Marreau is never infuriating.

Simpson I say Marreau, what about this Little Jimmy fellow, everybody seems to think that he did it.

Gwend: Simpson, whilst the idea of a revenge attack, on behalf of his deceased hamster, is I agree somewhat appealing as a motive for the extermination of his grandmother. I think that even if he used the Matterhorn as a vantage point, the likelihood of shooting her up the nose from a distance of three thousand miles is somewhat remote ! Besides that, why should he want to kill his Uncle Edward.

Simpson But Edward was killed accidentally, Marreau said so.

Marreau I said no such thing.

Simpson You did. You said it appears he was running, tripped and "blurk"

Marreau Appears my friend, does not mean happened. Appearances can be deceptive.

Gwend: Oh, thank goodness. A bit of common sense at last. I was beginning to think you had caught something off Simpson, like stupidity for instance.

Marreau No, when I investigated the scene further, I discovered this { *flourishes sock* }

Simpson It's a sock Marreau.

Gwend: { *sarcastically* } Well done Simpson, your observation is improving.

Simpson Thank-you Gwend. { *Gwendolyn hits her forehead* }

Gwend: D'you think it's the missing one, Marreau ?

Marreau It cannot be missing if I have it in my hand can it, Gwendolyn, I'd have thought you'd have realised that.

Gwend: No, I meant the one that Master Edward lost. Don't be such a pedant, Marreau.

Marreau Peasant ! Marreau is not a peasant, he is from the aristocracy.

Gwend: Pedant Marreau, not peasant.

Marreau Ah, once again, your silly English language, why do you have so many words that sound the same as each other. It is very confusing.....

Gwend: At least we don't get poison and fish mixed up....

Marreau Ah, I would prefer it if you did not bring that case up again, it was very embarrassing; let us return to the question of the sock. I have reconstructed in my mind the events that led up to Master Edward's untimely death. According to Cummings, after our interview with Edward, he ushered him to the Billiard room, after a while he said he was bored and went outside, asking Cummings to go and get the croquet mallets. Cummings got the mallets, gave them to Daisy and told her to take them to Master Edward. Daisy confirms all this, and says she took them to him. As she returned to the house, she heard the scream, Cummings came out of the house, and the two of them ran over and found the body. There was nobody else about, but, and this is very important, Edward had not moved from the spot.

Gwend: So he certainly wasn't running.

Marreau Precisely - and therefore

Gwend: Murder.

Simpson Or suicide.

Gwend: Of all the many ways that people choose to commit suicide, self-impalation especially employing a croquet mallet must be one of the rarer.

Marreau Indeed, I think we can rule out suicide.

Gwend: Also, it would have to be someone pretty strong.

Marreau Not necessarily...

Gwend: Oh ?

Marreau Well without going into too many gory details, the end of the mallet was sharpened, and

{ at this point Simpson dives behind aspidistra }

Gwend: Yes, I get the point -

Marreau Quite. So did he !

Gwend: Marreau, I wish you stop making these awful puns.

Marreau Marreau does not make awful puns. His puns are excellent. Now then I think it is time to interview the remaining son and heir. Simpson - go and fetch Monsieur Bertie, would you ?

Simpson Righty-ho. *{ exits }*

Gwend: What is your opinion now then Marreau ? With our chief suspect removed, it's thrown the field wide open hasn't it.

Marreau Indeed it has my dear. I must admit to being somewhat at a loss.

Gwend: Me too. But as Isabel and Edward were definitely covering something up with regards the bath, and as Edward is now dead, I think Isabel has some explaining to do.

Marreau Oh, you cannot think that that charming creature....

Gwend: Marreau, you mustn't let sentiment cloud your judgment. By the way, I'm intrigued, when did you and Isabel meet.

Marreau Ah, it was many years ago in Paris, the moonlight was dancing on the Seine, the sound of violins wafted gently through the still night air, the wine had been flowing, and there was love in our hearts.....

Gwend: Well, well, Marreau ! You old romantic. So what happened ?

Marreau I think that that is between Madame Isabel and myself !

Gwend: No Marreau, I didn't mean that - I meant why was there no happy outcome ?

Marreau Oh, well it was one of those things, we drifted apart, like leaves on a stream, the current of life took us in different directions, and we washed up on different shores.

Gwend: I've never known you use so many metaphors Marreau.

Marreau No well, C'est la vie.

{ Simpson re-enters, agitated, he trips over the rug }

Simpson I can't find him anywhere. No-one's seen him since breakfast.

Marreau Mon Dieu. This is very suspicious, is his car still outside ?

Gwend: *{ peering through window }* Yes they are all still there, I took the precaution of removing everyone's rotor-arms last night....

Simpson I say that was jolly clever - What is a rotor arm ?

Marreau It is a little thing which goes round and round in the engine, and without it the car doesn't go very far. Well done Gwendolyn, you are learning the - how you say - tricks of the trade.

Gwend: Yes Marreau. The only one I left was Simpson's, and I removed that this morning.

{ pulls rotor arm from pocket }

Simpson I say - can I have it back please.

Gwend: I suppose so, but don't put it back in until you want to use the car.

Simpson You'll have to put it in for me, dashed if I know where it goes !

Marreau Anyway, thanks to Gwendolyn, Monsieur Bertie cannot have got far. Simpson, you search the house, Gwendolyn and I shall...

{ Bertie walks casually into the room }

Bertie Looking for me ?

Marreau Yes Monsieur Bertie, you should not go hiding yourself away like that. You make the little red cells jump to conclusions.

Bertie Hiding ? But I was next door in the Billiard Room....

Simpson Ah Damn, forgot the Billiard Room.

Gwend: I should have guessed. *{ Simpson sits, reading newspaper }*

Marreau Well Monsieur Bertie, now that you are here, I wonder if you'd mind answering a few questions.

Bertie Not at all, fire away - Got to get the blighter who speared old Teddy, not to mention bagging mother ! I mean, it may be me next.

Marreau Yes, quite. I hope you don't mind me observing that you do not seem terribly upset by the recent events.

Bertie Stiff upper lip, you know. Got to keep your pecker up.

Marreau Your pecker ?

Gwend: Spirits Marreau.

Marreau Ah I see, "pecker", I will have to remember that. I suppose now that Edward is dead, you will inherit MacTallach castle as well as the main estate.

Bertie No as a matter of fact, I believe that passes to Isabel, being Teddy's wife you see.

Marreau Ah of course.....

Bertie Mind you she hates the place - can't find a motive there I'm afraid.

Gwend: Afraid ?

Bertie Oh, just a figure of speech, no I've got nothing against Isabel, Mother couldn't stand her, but then she was rather hard to please. Poor old bean. Pity she isn't still around, she'd have loved all this, loved a mystery did Mother.

Gwend: Would you mind telling us what you were doing when your mother was shot

Bertie Not at all, Trubolt and I had just finished a rather close game of billiards. I had suggested another game, but Trubolt said he was too tired, and was going to bed, he went out to find Angela, his wife you know.

Marreau Yes go on

Bertie And I went to have a quick word with Jane, but on my way I bumped into Protheroe.

Marreau Oh ?

Bertie Yes, he was coming down the stairs as I was going up. We spoke a few words to each other, and then I carried on up the stairs. I was just at the top, when I heard the shot. Of course I came rushing down again, and I ran to the gun room -

Gwend: How did you know the shot had come from the gun room ?

Bertie Oh, I don't know, urm, I think I heard somebody shout "gun room" actually.

Gwend: I see, and what happened when you got there ?

Bertie Well Trubolt, Angela and Protheroe had already got there, and then Cummings came dashing in. Sorry I can't be of more help, and I suppose I haven't really got an alibi, as such, but it would've been impossible for me to get to the gun room without passing Protheroe again....

Gwend: Do you think Protheroe could've done it ?

Bertie Oh well, I hadn't really thought about that. But now you come to mention it he was very edgy when I talked to him. Yes almost as though he was annoyed that we'd met. I mean he was civil, but very short, sort of embarrassed. I believe Daisy was the first on the scene after the shooting, perhaps she can throw some light on his movements.

Marreau Ah, Daisy, yes, I am afraid she is a little difficult to question, she says she saw someone wearing Master Edward's jacket leave the room as she entered.

Bertie Good Heavens, and of course poor Teddy was the next victim.

Marreau Precisely. And what were you doing when Master Edward met his death.

Bertie Ah. Even worse alibi this time I'm afraid.

Marreau Oh ?

Bertie Yes, I was in the library, reading the newspaper.

Marreau No-one else in there ?

Bertie No, Trubolt had been in earlier, but he left a good ten minutes before I heard the scream.

Gwend: But surely somebody saw you come out of the library then ?

Bertie No, I'm afraid I was a bit slow on the uptake there, by the time I came out of the room, everybody else had dashed over to see what was going on.

Marreau I see. Well thank-you for your time; oh and don't go hiding again or trying to leave the house.

Bertie Couldn't if I wanted to. Damned car won't work.

Marreau Oh, so you have tried to leave.

Bertie Only wanted to pop into the village, get some gaspers.

Marreau Gaspers ?

Gwend: Cigarettes, Marreau.

Marreau Aha. "Gaspers" hey, to keep your "pecker" up, no doubt. Ha ha.

Bertie { *he rises* } Something like that.

Marreau Ask Simpson, he smokes - how you say - like a furnace.

Bertie Oh thanks. { *exits* }

Marreau Well, what do you think of him.

Gwend: Honest, I'd say. Of course he's got the most to gain from inheriting the estate, but why would he want to kill his brother ?

Marreau Quite I tend to agree.

Simpson { *lifting his head from the newspaper* } I wonder why Protheroe was coming from Lady Jane's room.

Marreau & Gwend: [*together*] What ?

Simpson Just a thought, sorry.

Gwend: No, go on. What makes you think he was coming from Lady Jane's room ?

Simpson Well those are the East Tower stairs, they only lead up to three rooms, Lady Eustace's, Lady Jane's and my own. Lady Eustace always keeps hers locked, because of her jewellery, and I can't see why he'd want to see me. And anyway I was down here with you.

Gwend: Brilliant Simpson. I never thought you had it in you !

Simpson I wish you'd stop being sarcastic Gwend. I only....

Gwend: No I mean it. Well done !

Simpson Oh I say gosh !

Marreau Yes, this certainly means something, but I don't know what.

Gwend: I think I do.

Marreau Oh.

Gwend: Yes, don't forget Protheroe is a doctor.

Simpson Oh I see, so he was treating Lady Jane for something.

Gwend: In a manner of speaking I suppose.

Marreau What do you mean.

Gwend: Well I think it would be very interesting to have a word with her, and find out just what Dr. Protheroe is giving her.

{Blackout} End of Act II Scene 1

Act II Scene 2

Simpson is reading a newspaper. Marreau is sitting on the settee. Gwendolyn is pacing.

Marreau { *After a pause* } I wish you'd stop pacing Gwendolyn, it is very bad for the little grey cells

Simpson Red Marreau.

Marreau What ? Oh yes, Red.

Gwend: Would you mind if I interviewed Lady Jane on my own ?

Marreau What ? Why - is not Marreau the height of discretion and tact ?

Gwend: Well yes, Marreau, but there are a few questions I would like to ask her that might embarrass her a little.

Marreau Oh ?

Gwend: Well I just don't want you butting in at an important moment.

Marreau Butting in. Marreau does not butt, he is not a ram.

Gwend: No but, all the same - I tell you what - provided you're really quiet you can hide behind that screen { *points to fire-guard* }

Marreau Hide behind a screen !? What do you think I am, some kind of Peeping Dick ?

Gwend: Tom

Marreau What ?

Gwend: Never mind, just hide behind there - and don't say a word.

Marreau { *heavily* } Oh very well. { *hides behind screen* }

Gwend: Simpson, go and get Lady Jane, and then make yourself scarce

Simpson Oh ! Can't I hide behind the screen too ?

Gwend: No ! Now go and get her. { *Simpson exits* }

Marreau { *after a short pause, from behind screen* } This is ridiculous, Marreau does not like lurking. It is not natural for him.

Gwend: Shush Marreau, she's coming, remember - Not a word.

{ *Simpson re-enters, with Jane. He hovers and after a sharp glance from Gwend:, exits sulkily* }

Jane Where is Monsieur Marreau ?

Gwend: He will probably join us later - This must all have been very upsetting for you.

Jane Yes, it's terrible - first Mother, and now poor Teddy.

Gwend: Quite, I hope it hasn't made your condition any worse.

Jane Condition ?

Gwend: Oh I thought you had not been well....

Jane No, I'm fine, just upset that's all. What made you think that I'd been ill ?

Gwend: Oh, nothing, only I thought that Dr. Protheroe had been treating you for something -

Jane { *flushing* } Dr. Protheroe - why - no

Gwend: Last night, when your mother was shot, had he not been to see you ?

Jane Oh, that, um yes - just came to see if I was alright - nothing really -

Gwend: I see. { *positively changing subject* } You must miss Little Jimmy, when he goes off to Switzerland.

Jane Little Jimmy ?

Gwend: Your son.

Jane { *slightly stunned* } How did you know - { *pause* } - Yes I do miss him.

Gwend: And so does his father I should imagine -

Jane Yes { *realises her slip* } - What ! What d'you mean his father ?

Gwend: There are certain things which it is inadvisable for a doctor to do - and falling in love with one of his patients is one of them - especially if it results in a child.

Jane { *breaking down* } Oh, why must it all come out now. Mother held that over us for so long, threatened to have Alan struck off, I thought now that she was gone, we could.....

Marreau { *popping up from behind screen* } Aha ! So that is it.

Gwend: Marreau !!!

Jane { *breaks down completely* } You tricked me. Oh, why did he do it. There was no need. We had waited thirteen years.....

Marreau { *still behind screen, peering over, Mr. Chad-like* } So ! We have our murderer, motive and all.
{ *Jane is sobbing, Simpson re-enters* }

{ *Note: Marreau remains peering over screen until stated otherwise* }

Simpson What's all the commotion

Marreau Lady Jane has - how you say - dropped Dr. Protheroe in it !

Simpson Oh I say ! You mean Protheroe did it !

Gwend: I wouldn't be so sure if I was you -

Marreau Whatever do you mean - You heard her say it

Gwend: Yes but she only thinks that he did it - Yes of course he had a motive, but then as Mrs Farley said, everyone had a motive ! And besides, why should he kill Edward ?

{ *Dr. Protheroe enters, unseen by All* }

Jane He certainly didn't kill Teddy - he was with me ! There's no point me covering up the fact now.

Dr.Proth Cat out of the bag is it Jane, dear ?

Marreau Cat ? What cat ? Lemmings, hamsters and now cats ! There are a lot of furry creatures to consider in this case.

Gwend: It's a saying Marreau. It means "The game is up"

Marreau Game ? What game ? I do not consider murder to be a game.

Gwend: No, no. A metaphorical game. Oh God ! I'll explain it to you later, just forget about the cat.

Marreau What cat ?

Gwend: The metaphorical one. Just forget about it.

Marreau I.....

Jane I'm sorry, darling. They tricked me. And Marreau thinks you murdered Lady Eustace.

Dr.Proth Ah, I wondered when I would become chief suspect, it seemed to be doing the rounds.

Marreau Yes, Doctor Protheroe, I'm afraid you *are* chief suspect, and unless you can find some plausible excuse, which does not feature vegetables, cats, bicarbonate-of-soda or chocolate policemen, I'm afraid I will have to hand you over to the Police, *when they arrive*.

Dr.Proth Well as far as Lady Eustace's murder is concerned I was talking to Trubolt when the shot was fired - and we both went into the gun-room together. Daisy was already there by then, so I don't really see how I could have shot her. And as for Edward, I was - well let's just say I was with Jane.

Gwend: You say you were with Trubolt, was Mrs Trubolt with him ?

Dr.Proth Angela ? Yes, well no, not actually when I was with him. When I came downstairs, I saw Trubolt and Angela, and stopped for a chat - we were talking about the shoot.

Marreau The shooting ?

Dr.Proth No the shoot, the pheasants.

Marreau Ah sorry. Go on

Dr.Proth Yes, and I think Angela was a bit bored by it all, so she said she'd go and have a word with Jane. They're old friends you know. Went to school together.

Gwend: Oh ?

Jane Yes Peregrine and Angela were the only ones who knew about Me and Alan, apart from Mother of course. Oh, and Little Jimmy.

Marreau Peregrine ?

Jane Sorry. Major Trubolt...

Gwend: So did Angela come up to see you ?

Jane No. I'm afraid that when I heard the shot, I just listened for a while, then I heard all the commotion downstairs, so I came down and by that time all hell had broken loose. I suppose Angela was on her way up when the shot was fired, and turned back to see what was going on.

Dr.Proth Yes, that'd be about right, she joined us all in the gun room after a couple of minutes. I must say she took it very well, after all it was a rather gory sight.

Gwend: What did you do when you realised what had happened ?

Dr.Proth Oh, well Daisy was trembling, so I told her to go and fetch Cummings, and get herself a drink. It was pretty obvious that Lady Eustace was dead, but I checked her pulse to make sure. By the time I looked round, the room was full of people. Isabel was standing at the doorway shrieking. Bertie, Edward and Jane were trying to calm her down, and then Cummings came rushing in. I said we should bring the body into the sitting room for an examination. We were just about to move her, when you charged in Marreau, telling us not to move the body.

Marreau Quite. I would have thought that you as a Doctor, should know the procedure in these cases.

Dr.Proth Yes I suppose I should, but I didn't think, besides this is the first murder that I've come across, and anyway at the time we thought it was an accident.

{ Marreau finally appears from behind screen }

Marreau Very well, we will check your story with Major....

{ Vincent the Valet enters }

Vincent *{ To Marreau }* There is a policeman at the door sir, a Sgt. Farmer, wishing to speak to you.

Marreau Ah, thank-you Vincent, show him in -

Vincent Very good sir. *{ exits }*

Gwend: We haven't spoken to Vincent yet have we. We must get his side of the story.

Dr.Proth I don't think he'll be a lot of help, I believe he was out tending the horses.

{ Vincent re-enters with archetypal rustic bobby, Sgt. Farmer (Mrs.Farley) }
{ Protheroe sits on armchair }

Farmer What be all this I been 'earin' 'bout a murder then ?

Simpson Two now.

Farmer Two murders ! By 'eck. Frimington's never 'ad one afore, not in all the time I bin 'ere, and now we gone an' got two of 'em. By 'eck I'd better go and get the boss. 'E'll not thank me for leavin' 'im out o' this one.

Gwend: But you've only just got here - surely you want to investigate something before you go ?

Farmer Better not. I'll only go and mess summat up, I'm not used to dealin' wi' murders. Lost cats is more my line.

Marreau Aha, so you know about the cat ?

Farmer What cat ?

Marreau Precisely.

Gwend: Don't worry sergeant, it's only a metaphorical cat....

Farmer Never 'eard o' one o' them afore, foreign is it ?

Simpson Gosh no, I've not met a meta-what-ever-it-was cat either, and I've shot tigers in India !

Jane Gwendolyn means the cat doesn't really exist -

Gwend: Thank-you Jane

Marreau What do you mean does not exist.

Simpson I say - d'you mean it's the ghost of a cat ?

Gwend: No it's metaphorical. It never existed.

Farmer I can't find cats what 'as never existed. Beyon' me that is. Tabbies I'm best at, though I did once track down a Siamese. Stuck in a bush it were. Bit scrawny, but give 'im a bit o' milk an' 'e was a' right a' rain.

Marreau I fear I am getting a little confused.

Farmer What 'as this 'ere meta-thingy cat got to do with the murder anyway ?

Marreau Precisely

Gwend: Absolutely nothing !

Marreau But I think it could be important -

Gwend: *{losing patience}* Look, shut up about the bloody cat will you ? It has nothing at all to do with this case. Even if it had ever existed, then neither it, nor the lemmings nor even yet Little Jimmy's hamster have any bearing on this case whatsoever. We have two dead bodies out there, and a policeman in here. Do you not think Sgt. Farmer, that you ought at least inspect the bodies ?

Farmer I'd rather not if it's all the same to you my dear.

Gwend: Why ever not.

Farmer Bit of a queezy stomach I'm afraid. Don't do to look at corpses. Sends me all of a wobbly.

Simpson Gosh, I get that too.

Gwend: Well run along and get your superior will you.

Farmer Don't 'ave to do that, my dear.

Gwend: Oh ? Why not ?

Farmer I got my bike, I can cycle over.

Gwend: If you talk to Simpson nicely, he'll take you there in his car.

Farmer No, no, I'd rather cycle, shouldn't take lifts off civies, they might crash, and I'd be for the 'igh jump.

Gwend: In Simpson's case you're probably quite right.

Simpson I say Gwenders that was rather uncalled for ! *{Simpson sits reading paper}*

Farmer Well, I'll be on me way then, nice meetin' you all. *{exits}*

{Daisy enters}

Daisy Pardonin' me, but Mrs. Farley wants to know what you'll be wantin' for lunch.

Marreau Ah, Daisy, I wonder if you'd mind answering a few questions.

Daisy 'Spose so. What sort o' questions.

Marreau Well, lets start with how long you've worked here.
Daisy Oh I only been here just a few weeks.
Gwend: Oh, I see, you seem to have settled in quite well. I think you may be able to help us; you were the first on the scene after Lady Eustace was shot, and the last person to see Master Edward alive - excluding the murderer of course.
Daisy Er - yes. But I can't tell you nuffink more than I've said already.
Gwend: Well when you saw Master Edward just before he was murdered, what was he like ?
Daisy Oh, about fortyish, rather plump.....
Gwend: No, I meant what was his demeanour like ?
Daisy His what ?
Gwend: Was he agitated or worried ?
Daisy Oh ! I see. No, he seemed alright to me.

{ *Trubolt and Angela enter, unseen* }

Marreau Am I not right in thinking that Croquet is best played by more than one person ?
Daisy Er - yes.
Marreau Who was he going to play with then ?
Trubolt Us.
Marreau Ah. Major Trubolt, and Mrs. Trubolt. I'm glad you're here, perhaps you can shed some light on the situation.
Trubolt Not really I'm afraid. We'd said we'd have a game with him earlier. But by the time we got there, he was a gonna !
Angela Ghastly. Poor old Teddy never hurt anyone. And that awful wife of his...
Marreau Isabel ? How can you call that charming creature.....
Gwend: You must forgive Marreau, He's a bit soft when it comes to that particular female.
Daisy Can I go now ?
Marreau Yes run along Daisy { *she exits* }
Trubolt { *After making sure Daisy has left* } Matter of fact, I think there was something going on between Teddy and Daisy !
ALL What !!
Trubolt Well, I don't think Daisy was very interested, but I thought I saw Teddy trying to kiss her the other day. Bit of an old softy really, fell for pretty young things right, left and centre !
Angela You never told me.
Trubolt Sorry dearest; thought I'd better keep it to myself, but now he's dead I don't suppose it'll do any harm.
Gwend: This is rather intriguing.
Marreau It's despicable, married to a wonderful woman like Isabel and carrying on with tarty little maids.
Angela Monsieur Marreau, I'm sorry to shatter your illusions - but Isabel is far from wonderful. If anyone is a tart, it is she -
Marreau WHAT !!
Trubolt Easy darling

Angela I'm not going to stand by, and hear that money-grabbing little strumpet referred to as wonderful. She only married Edward for the title, and of course for the money he'd inherit. She's had at least three affairs that I know of, since they were married.

Marreau I don't believe it.
Trubolt Are you calling my wife a liar Marreau ?
Marreau No, no - just.....
Trubolt Because if you are, I'm afraid I shall have to ask you to step outside !
Marreau No, no, it was just a bit of a shock, that's all. I mean, I know, or at least knew Isabel rather well.....
Angela You're not the only one.
Simpson { *peering up from behind newspaper* } No he isn't !
Marreau & **Gwend**: [*together*] What ?!
Simpson Oh, it was years ago, in Paris, the moonlight was dancing on the Seine...
Gwend: I'm getting an incredible feeling of deja vu here !
Simpson Well, you know.....
Gwend: I can certainly guess
Marreau { *Thunderstruck* } You Simpson ? You ?! Oh Mon Dieu; Not you !! Anyone but you !!!
{ *Marreau flumps down on settee, devastated* }

Simpson What on earth's the matter with Marreau, Gwenders ?
Gwend: Don't worry about it Simpson, I'll tell you later.
Angela Well I think that proves my point !
Marreau { *still depressed, but rallying* } Indeed, I am beginning to see -
Gwend: Do you know if Isabel is having an affair at the moment ?
Angela Well, I'm not sure - but I did see her coming out of the stables, with a rather satisfied expression on her face -
Trubolt Good grief - Not the horses !
Angela No, no. Vincent.
Trubolt Oh, I see
Gwend: Well I think that explains the mystery of the simultaneous bath - they were both cheating on each other ! I think Marreau, that we can now work out who the murderer - or should I say murderess is !
Marreau { *Out of the side of his mouth - to Gwend:* } Can we ?
Gwend: Yes - I think it's time you called everyone together for one of your famous denouements !
Marreau Really ?! Oh, right then. Simpson - go and get everyone will you.

{Blackout - Curtain} - End of Act II Scene 2

Act II Scene 3

*The entire surviving household is assembled. Some sitting, some standing, some perching.
The servants are all standing. Marreau is holding court, with Gwendolyn discreetly
positioned to tell him what to say.*

Marreau { *Self-importantly* } Now that everyone is assembled, I will reveal to you the mysteries of this most fiendish case, and expose the murderer who is in your very midst at this moment !
{ *There is a murmur of disquiet* }

Bertie Is that entirely safe Marreau - Shouldn't you have him handcuffed or something ?

Marreau { *Ignoring him* } This was a most intriguing mystery. However, to a man of my abilities, the solution was quite simple. We were told by Daisy that she had seen Lady Eustace's murderer and that he was wearing the jacket of Master Edward. Despite Isabel's attempts to cover for her husband, it is obvious that the murderer is indeed Master Edward.

ALL { *Stunned* } uh ?

Gwend: He's dead, Marreau. He was the second victim -

Marreau However - as he was in fact the second victim, this was a clever ploy by the real murderer, who was in fact { *pause as Marreau looks round for suitable suspect* } - Doctor Protheroe -

Gwend: Don't be ridiculous Marreau - { *whispers to Marreau* } it's Isabel -

Marreau Doctor Protheroe, who was having an illicit affair with Lady Jane, and was in fact the father of her child - Little Jimmy - { *gasps from those not "in the know"* }

Dr.Proth Very well I admit it -

Jane No darling, you couldn't have killed Teddy, you were with me

Dr.Proth { *to Jane* } Quiet darling - you don't understand -

Jane What ?

Gwend: I don't understand -

Jane I'm not going to let you sacrifice yourself - I did it -

Marreau What ?

{ *Daisy bursts into tears* }

Simpson Don't cry Daisy -

Trubolt Look here everybody - I'm going to come clean - I don't see why all of you should suffer - It was me - I killed them both.

Angela No you didn't darling, I did -

Trubolt What ?

Marreau { *shouting* } QUIET !!! { *all are quiet* }

I have told you who the perpetrator is - and he has admitted it - surely this is enough -

Gwend: But Marreau, they're all covering for someone, can't you see - I thought it was Isabel - but I must have been mistaken - nobody would sacrifice themselves for her -

Isabel Charming -

Vincent I would - I love Isabel, and now Master Edward is dead, I intend to marry her....

Isabel Don't be ridiculous Vincent, you're far too poor - and anyway you smell of horses -

Vincent You're a fine one to talk !

Isabel How dare you !

Cummings I told you it would come to no good messing about with them upstairs -

Mrs.Farley No Vincent you find yourself a nice little parlour-maid like Daisy here

Vincent Daisy don't like that sort of thing - do you Daisy - I saw Master Edward trying it on with her just before he got himself killed - I don't know what she said to 'im but he looked right shocked, I'll tell you.

Bertie Funny that - Edward normally had quite a way with the female staff !

Marreau I don't see this is getting us very far -

Gwend: Hold on Marreau - Of course, I am a fool - Daisy come here a moment would you.....

Daisy No { *goes to get away* }

Gwend: Simpson grab her !

Simpson Right-ho { *Simpson grabs her, she struggles, her wig drops off ----* }

Bertie Good Lord ! Little Jimmy !

Jane Jimmy; what on earth -

Dr.Proth { *to Jane* } Didn't you realise -

Jane No, I

{ *A doorbell rings, Cummings leaves to answer it* }

{ *Jimmy = Little Jimmy = Daisy* }

Jimmy She shouldn't have killed my hamster - Old bag, she deserved everything she got.....

{ *Jane is sobbing* }

Dr.Proth But why did you kill your Uncle Teddy son ?

Jimmy He found out who I was, and realised I'd killed old sour-face.

Marreau As I suspected all along - I knew the 'amster was an important clue.

{ *Cummings re-enters* }

Cummings The police have arrived

Marreau Tell them that Marreau the Magnificent has triumphed again !!

***** BLACKOUT : CURTAIN - **The end of Marreau and the Chocolate Policeman** *****

Marreau returns in *Marreau and the African Moon*