

# Marreau and the African Moon

**A detective comedy in two acts by Rob Farrow**

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## **Dramatis Personae**

Hemlock Marreau	The famous continental detective.
Gwendolyn Bayne	His secretary and assistant.
Simpson	His friend
Viscount Alexander	The host's son.
Lady Theresa	His sister
Captain Ranulph Smith	Her husband.
The Countess Catherine	A wealthy guest
Havelock	The butler.
Mrs. Johnson	The cook.
Parkhurst	The footman.
Rose	The maid.
Doctor Protheroe	The doctor from M & the C.P..
Inspector Farmer	The former Sgt.Farmer

# Act I Scene 1

As per Marreau & the Chocolate Policeman : sofa, two armchairs, table, 2 chairs.

Marreau is sitting in an armchair [S.R.] reading a newspaper

Simpson is peering out of the window [S.R.]

Gwendolyn is reading a book about fingerprints, whilst sitting on the sofa.

NOTE: Whilst Simpson still has a dodgy stomach it is not played on so much as in *Chocolate Policeman*

Simpson D'you think it'll rain Marreau ?

Marreau What was that Simpson ?

Simpson Do you think it will rain today Marreau ?

Marreau Well I believe there is a depression over Northern France, with a high to the east of Greenland, add to this the fact that Sumburgh coastal station reports a visibility of only 100 yards, and I would suggest there is a reasonable likelihood of precipitation.

Simpson [*Simpson looks like a startled fish*] Gosh ! So *IS* it going to rain ?

Gwend Probably.

Marreau Indeed my dear Gwendolyn, I think the word "probably" sums up the statistical evidence fairly succinctly.

Simpson I thought it was going to rain yesterday - but then it didn't - but it nearly did.

Marreau No, no, no ! It was obvious that it wouldn't rain yesterday- why on earth did you think it might rain yesterday ?

Simpson I get this funny feeling in my big toe - usually means it's going to rain.

Gwend I'd tell the Met. Office about your toe if I were you, they might want to use it in future .....

Simpson Oh, really, d'you think so ?

[**Havelock the butler enters**]

Havelock Monsieur Marreau, his lordship would be most grateful if you would have a word with him in the blue drawing room - a rather delicate matter I believe.

Marreau Very well Havelock, if Marreau's unrivalled brainpower is called upon, he will assist in any way he can.

[**Exit Marreau & Havelock**]

Simpson Well Gwenders, that was quite a bash last night wasn't it - Marreau certainly seemed to be enjoying himself.

Gwend Yes, old Hemlock does get into the spirit of these occasions, I must admit. Mind you I thought he was showing off a bit with that mango !

Simpson Yes, he seems to have quite a way with fruit.

Gwend I wonder what this delicate matter is.

Simpson What delicate matter Gwendy ?

Gwend Listen here Simpson, the next time you call me Gwendy, I will do to you what Marreau did to that mango - understand ?

Simpson [*Simpson pulls a slightly horrified expression at the thought*] Sorry - so what's this delicate matter.

Gwend Well I don't know, do I ? That's the whole point !

Simpson I don't understand.

Gwend Simpson - may I suggest that you do not start saying "I don't understand" every time that peanut you call a brain gets somewhat baffled - otherwise there is likely to be a constant murmur from your direction.

Simpson Ah ! Good point - I have to admit all this detection stuff goes right over my head - it always stuns me how Marreau solves these cases.

Gwend Yes well, I think it stuns Marreau half the time.

Simpson I heard him telling Lady Theresa about some of his cases. She was lapping it up. Loved the bit about the hamster - I wish I could talk to girls like that !

Gwend Never mind Simpson - every dog has his day.

Simpson I know - the terrible thing is - I think I might have had mine already and not noticed.

**[Lady Theresa enters]**

**Theresa** Hello, mind if I join you ?

**Simpson** No - no - not at all Lady Theresa, do have a hamster - a chair.

*[Simpson proffers the hardest-looking chair in the room]*

**Gwend** I think Lady Theresa might be more comfortable on the sofa, actually Simpson.

**Simpson** Oh crikey, yes, sorry - here have a sofa.

*[As he says this he starts to pull Gwendolyn off it to allow Theresa the whole sofa]*

**Theresa** I don't need all of it, Mr. Simpson, I'll sit next to Gwendolyn.

**Simpson** Oh, right - yes - of course - I mean it's not as if you're fat and need the whole sofa - ha ha ha.

**Gwend** Sit down Simpson and take the weight off your brain ! *[They settle]*

**Theresa** Isn't it terrible about the Countess.

**Gwend** The Countess ?

**Theresa** Yes, having all her jewels stolen like that.

**Gwend** Really ! It's the first we've heard about it.

**Simpson** No it isn't.

**Gwend** What ? You know about this ?

**Simpson** Yes, the footman - what's his name - Parkhurst - that's it - he told me.

**Theresa** Yes I'm afraid it's all round the house - Daddy was hoping to keep it quiet - but you know what servants are like.

**Gwend** Why didn't you tell us, Simpson ?

**Simpson** Parkhurst asked me not to tell anyone.

**Gwend** Fine. *[turning to Theresa]* So what's she had stolen then ?

**Theresa** Oh an absolute fortune - a diamond tiara, an emerald neklace, the African Moon brooch .....

**Simpson** Good heavens isn't that the one with four enormous rubies around a gigantic piece of amber ?

**Theresa** No, six enormous sapphires round a gigantic central pearl actually.

**Simpson** Close.

**Gwend** Anything else missing ?

**Theresa** Oh yes, tons of stuff - dozens of rings, brooches, pendants you name it. About a million pounds' worth so they say.

**Simpson** Good Lord !!

**Gwend** Quite a haul.

**Theresa** The countess is taking it all very well, I must say - mind you I suppose they're all insured to the hilt. It's lucky Monsieur Marreau is here, I'm sure he'll get to the bottom of it.

**[Parkhurst enters]**

**Parkhurst** Hexcusing me, m'lady, but Captain Ranulph, your husband, requires your presence in the library.

**Theresa** Oh no, what is it now ?

**Parkhurst** It seems he's having problems with the crossword m'lady. I tried to help him but he declined my offer using his riding whip, I considered it diplomatic therefore not to press the subject.

**Theresa** I'm sorry Parkhurst, Ranulph's a devil with that riding whip - how's your back now by the way ?

**Parkhurst** The scars are healing nicely, thank-you m'lady.

**Theresa** Jolly good - run along and tell him I'll be there in a minute, would you.

**Parkhurst** Begging your pardon m'lady, but couldn't you come along himmediately. The captain doesn't take kindly to delays as you know - we had to buy six new billiard cues last time.

**Theresa** There aren't any billiard cues in the library though are there, Parkhurst.

**Parkhurst** No m'lady but the Hencyclopaedia Britannica is positioned perilously close to him - and him being such a good discus thrower .....

**Theresa** Oh, very well. *[To Gwend & Simpson]* Excuse me won't you, duty calls.

**[Parkhurst & Theresa exit]**

**Gwend** Poor Parkhurst; I believe Ranulph mistreats all the staff terribly.  
**Simpson** He was a bit of a bully in the army too.  
**Gwend** Really ? You know him then.  
**Simpson** Only by reputation - stories you know.  
**Gwend** Do tell.  
**Simpson** Well in India he was known as Raging Ranulph - I think that came about when he tied a young lieutenant to a field gun and fired 21 salutes.  
**Gwend** Good grief, what did he do that for ?  
**Simpson** I believe he found him in bed with his wife.  
**Gwend** What ! Lady Theresa was unfaithful ?  
**Simpson** No, no - the Lieutenant found his wife in bed with Ranulph.  
**Gwend** Well surely it was the lieutenant who should have felt aggrieved then ?  
**Simpson** Good Lord no - Rank has its privileges you know - no Ranulph had him up on charges of interrupting an officer in the performance of his duties.  
**Gwend** And he was found guilty ???!!!  
**Simpson** No - the court martial dismissed the case out of hand - [I'm] not sure why - that's why he took the action himself.

**[Viscount Alexander enters]**

**Alexander** Ah, that's where you're hiding ! Hope you enjoyed last night's bash. I thought it all went jolly well.  
**Simpson** I'll say. Splendid. Shame about this countess business though.  
**Alexander** [*somewhat more seriously*] Oh, you've heard.  
**Gwend** Lady Theresa just told us about it.  
**Alexander** Yes - I was talking to father about it, suggested we asked your friend Marreau if he'd do a spot of poking about, so-to-speak, see if we can get it all cleared up without involving the boys in blue.  
**Gwend** Any particular reason why you don't want the police involved ?  
**Alexander** Well you know; size tens thumping about the place, wrecking the herbaceous border and all that. We've had it all before.  
**Gwend** Oh ?  
**Simpson** Was that the stolen Rembrandts case ?  
**Alexander** Indeed it was - *and* they never found the damned things.

**[Havelock enters]**

**Havelock** Excuse me m'lord but there's been a bit of a kerfuffle in the library, I wonder if you'd be so good as to calm the Captain down.  
**Alexander** Oh dear, much damage ?  
**Havelock** I fear we may need a new Encyclopaedia Britannica m'lord.  
**Alexander** Anyone hurt ?  
**Havelock** Only Parkhurst m'lord - and he's getting used to it.  
**Alexander** [*To Gwend & Simpson*] Sorry about this, I'd better go and sort it out.

**[Alexander & Havelock exit]**

**Simpson** Looks like Parkhurst didn't get out in time !  
**Gwend** No. [*Subject change*] I was surprised you knew about the Rembrandts.  
**Simpson** Oh, I take a bit of an interest in paintings - tried my hand at it myself at one time.  
**Gwend** Oh ? Any good ?  
**Simpson** Not really. Would you like to see my etchings ?  
**Gwend** Another time, thank-you, Simpson.

**[Marreau re-enters]**

**Marreau** A most intriguing case. I shall enjoy solving this little mystery.  
**Gwend** What did Lord Smedling have to tell you then, Hemlock ?

**Marreau** I am sworn to secrecy actually Gwendolyn.

**Gwend** Oh come on Marreau, how am I supposed to solve the case for you if you don't tell me all the details.

**Marreau** I have told you before about suggesting that you solve my cases, I am the Great Marreau, and you are merely my secretary - please remember that.

**Gwend** Very well. Let me guess then - the Countess has had a million pounds-worth of jewels stolen and the family wants to have the case solved and the jewels returned without involving the police if at all possible - Correct ?

**Marreau** What !! How did you know ?!

**Gwend** Experience my dear Marreau, simply experience - and intelligence of course ....

**Marreau** Alright, as you seem to know most of the details, I'll tell you the rest.

**Gwend** That's so kind of you.

**Marreau** Well as you know, the countess arrived late last night, after the ball had finished and most of the guests had gone home. This is very fortunate as it narrows down the number of suspects considerably.

**Simpson** As long as one of the guests didn't pretend to leave and actually stayed behind to carry out the theft.

**Gwend** Very good Simpson, have you been reading detective novels ?

**Marreau** I suppose that is a possibility, but the way the robbery was carried out suggests an intimate knowledge of this house, the sort of knowledge not possessed by a casual visitor.

**Simpson** They could have cased the joint.

**Gwend** "Cased the joint ?" You *have* been reading detective novels, haven't you.

**Simpson** Only a few.

**Marreau** What is this "Casing the joint" ? Some kind of cooking term ? Like Beef Wellington ?

**Gwend** It's slang Marreau; it means to have a look round the place and plan out methods of entry and exit etcetera.

**Marreau** What has this to do with a joint ? Do they get into the house pretending to be chefs or something ?

**Gwend** No it's just part of the saying. Look Marreau, whilst - against my better judgement - I have to admit that what Simpson says is a possibility, let us work on the theory that it was indeed an inside job.

**Marreau** "Inside job" ? What - you are suggesting that the decorators did it ?!

**Gwend** Oh God, I could get old explaining this ! An "Inside job" is when the crime was committed by someone who lives or works in the place where the crime took place. I'd've thought you'd have come across that saying Marreau.

**Marreau** Of course, my dear Gwendolyn ... just testing.

**Gwend** So Marreau, why must they have known the house so well ?

**Marreau** Ah, yes, because the jewels were placed inside a safe which was hidden behind a picture in a dressing room adjoining the room in which the Countess slept.

**Gwend** So we're looking for a safecracker; there shouldn't be too many of them in the house - I'm getting a nasty feeling that Simpson may be right; this sounds like a professional job.

**Marreau** Do not jump to conclusions Gwendolyn. The safe was not "cracked" as you say but stolen.

**Gwend** Stolen ?!

**Marreau** Yes they chipped away at the brickwork and removed the whole safe.

**Simpson** [*light dawns*] So *that's* what all that banging was last night.

**Gwendolyn & Marreau** [*Together*] What ?

**Simpson** Well I believe my room backs onto the countess' room, and I was kept awake last night by this tapping noise - it went on for about half an hour.

**Marreau** Sacre Bleu ! You did not think something strange was happening ?

**Simpson** Not really - I thought it was death-watch beetle.

**Gwend** I'm surprised you could hear it over your brain ticking !

**Simpson** Then there was a thump, and I heard some-one say "Got it !", so I assumed they'd killed it.

**Marreau** Killed it ? Killed what ?

**Simpson** The death-watch beetle.

**Gwend** Simpson, you are probably the stupidest person in England ! Someone steals a million pounds' worth of jewellery from a room adjoining your own, you hear the theft taking place - and you go to sleep - brilliant.

**Simpson** [*rather upset*] Well I wasn't to know. I didn't even know the countess had arrived 'till I spoke to Parkhurst this morning and I certainly didn't know she was in the next room or that she'd got all those jewels with her.

**Gwend** Alright, I suppose I was expecting a bit much. What I can't understand is how they carried the safe away, it must've weighed a ton.

**Marreau** It was only a little safe. Apparently the man that installed it carried it up the stairs on his own, so it couldn't have been very heavy.

**Gwend** So it's probably miles away by now; and all they'd have to do is cut it open with a welding torch.

**Marreau** Ah, now that is where it gets interesting, and why I think it must be what you call an inside job.

**Gwend** Oh ?

**Marreau** Yes. Do you remember there was a robbery here a few years ago ?  
**Gwend** [*feigning vague knowledge*] Oh yes, paintings wasn't it ?  
**Marreau** Indeed my dear Gwendolyn, two Raphaels to be precise -  
**Simpson** I think you'll find they were Rembrandts actually.  
**Marreau** Were they - oh well, same sort of thing - well after that they fitted bars to all the windows and very complicated locks on all the doors.  
**Gwend** So it's unlikely anyone broke in.  
**Marreau** Almost impossible I would say.  
**Gwend** And everyone who was present last night is still here this morning.  
**Marreau** Correct.  
**Simpson** Hold on a minute Marreau, as this banging kept me awake, how come the countess didn't wake up.  
**Marreau** An excellent question my friend - and one I intend to ask her presently.

[[ **Blackout** ]]

# Act I Scene 2

Scene - the same.

Gwendolyn is making notes at the table.

Marreau is sitting on the sofa tapping his temple.

Marreau Where's Simpson, Gwendolyn ?

Gwend He's gone for a lie down, said he was feeling tired after being kept awake last night.

Marreau Have you any ideas Gwendolyn - who might have done it ?

Gwend Well, if our supposition is right, then excluding Simpson, yourself and me, there are only seven possible suspects - oh and the countess herself of course.

Marreau The countess would hardly steal her own jewels would she Gwendolyn.

Gwend What about the insurance money - it would be somewhat handy to have the jewels *and* a million pounds, wouldn't it.

Marreau Of course - I hadn't thought of that.

[Havelock enters]

Havelock "The Countess Catherine Augusta Von Hohenhausen of Mecklenberg-Strelitz"

[Marreau & Gwend stand]

[The countess enters] [Marreau is obviously impressed] [Havelock exits]

Marreau Countess Catherine Augusta Von Hohenhausen of Mecklenberg-Strelitz, this is indeed an honour.

[He kisses her hand]

Countess [slight pause] Call me Kitty.

Gwend Thank heavens for that.

[Countess sits on sofa, Marreau sits next to her. Gwend sits on chair S.L.]

Marreau May I say how enchanting you are looking.

Gwend Uh-o !

Countess Why thank you Monsieur Marreau. I am honoured to be in the presence of the great French detective.

Marreau Swiss actually.

Countess [surprised] Swiss ?

Gwend [more surprised] Swiss ?

Marreau [flatly, emphatically] Swiss.

Gwend [fatalistically] Swiss.

Marreau Firstly, I would like to extend my personal condolences on the loss - temporary loss - of your jewellery.

Countess [stoically] I do hope you can help, Monsieur Marreau, it is all I have in the world. Once we were a very rich family, but my late husband lost it all, and then committed suicide !

Marreau *Zut Alors !* How terrible - did he lose it in disastrous business venture ?

Countess No, he just lost it. Put it down somewhere and forgot where he'd put it. He always was very forgetful.

Gwend Well at least you'll be able to collect on the insurance for your lost jewels.

Countess I'm afraid not. I couldn't afford the insurance premium. So if you cannot find my jewels I will be destitute.

Gwend Well that's one theory out the window !

Marreau Now countess, er Kitty; to help me in my investigation, I will need to ask you a few questions.

Are you sitting comfortably ?

Countess Yes thank-you.

Marreau Then we'll begin.

Gwend What's this, children's hour ?

Marreau Before I start, I would like to say once again how wonderful you look...

Gwend *MARREAU !* [She grabs Marreau's arm for a 'quiet word']

[Confidentially but between gritted teeth] Stop chatting her up and just ask the relevant questions !

Marreau Gwendolyn, whatever do you mean ? I am trying to get to the bottom of it.

Gwend I know, that's what I'm worried about !.

**Marreau** I do not follow. Let me resume my investigation, and I will thank-you not to interrupt.  
*[Marreau sits next to The Countess again]* It would seem that the robbers removed the safe by chipping away at the wall around it; did you not hear anything ?

**Countess** I am afraid that I was sound asleep, I think someone must have put a sleeping draught in my glass of water, I remember it did taste funny.

**Marreau** Aha ! The fiends !

**Countess** The first thing I remember is when the maid woke me about nine this morning, I was still very sleepy, but I couldn't help noticing the door.

**Gwend** The door ?

**Countess** Yes the one to the dressing room. It had been ripped off its hinges and was lying against the bottom of the bed.

**Marreau** And this aroused your suspicions ?

**Countess** Well I was a little surprised. I mean it was still attached when I went to sleep.

**Gwend** So what happened next ?

**Countess** Um, I drew Rose's attention to the door .....

**Marreau** Rose ?

**Countess** Yes, that's the maid's name I believe.

**Marreau** Oh I see, do go on.

**Countess** And she said "*Holy Mary, Mother-of-God*" a few times and ran off to get the butler.

**Gwend** And so was Havelock the next on the scene ?

**Countess** Yes, he came rushing in with Tubby.

**Marreau** Tubby ?

**Countess** I am sorry; Viscount Alexander - his friends call him Tubby.

**Marreau** I see - what you call a knicker-name.

**Gwend** Nickname Marreau.

**Marreau** Indeed, sorry to have interrupted - please continue.

**Countess** Tubby and Havelock went into the dressing room and I heard them say "Good grief" and similar comments, then they came back into my room and told me the safe had been stolen, and I fainted I'm afraid.

**[Simpson enters]**

**Marreau** *[Marreau stands, holding The Countess's hand, she also stands]* Well thank-you for your time.  
**Simpson** I say have I missed anything ?

**[On hearing Simpson's voice, Countess wheels round to look at Simpson]**

**Countess** *Simmy !!!*  
**Simpson** *Kitty !!!*

**[They rush towards each other, collide, and embrace fondly]**

**Countess** *Simmy !!!*  
**Simpson** Gosh !

**Gwend** *[stunned]* *[To Marreau]* I think they may know each other, Marreau.  
**Marreau** I was forming the same conclusion myself.  
**Gwend** Er - Simmy (!) - Sorry to interrupt but ....

**Countess** Simmy, it's so long !  
**Simpson** I suppose it is.

**Marreau** Simpson, please put the countess down.

**[The following should be said jauntily, Countess is nearly as stupid as Simpson]**

**Simpson** *[They part]* Good heavens Kitty - *you're* the countess !  
**Countess** Didn't you know dearest, I married Fluffy Hohenhausen ....  
**Simpson** Of Mecklenberg-Strelitz ?  
**Countess** The same.

**Simpson** Gosh ! - How is old Fluffy ?  
**Countess** Dead.  
**Simpson** I say, that's a bit of a boo-hoo and all that ! Poor old Fluffy - How d'it happen ?  
**Countess** Suicide  
**Simpson** Ceremonially with the Great Sword of the Hohenhausen's ?  
**Countess** No, he shot himself - up the nose !  
**Gwend** Oh not again !  
**Simpson** He did have rather a big nose didn't he.  
**Countess** Family trait - He was probably aiming for his temple and his nose got in the way  
**Simpson** Sounds like Fluffy - Oh well can't be helped.  
**Countess** Bit of a mess I'm afraid ....  
**Simpson** I can imagine [*face changes*] - excuse me - [*Dashes behind screen, clutching stomach*]  
**Marreau** Countess, am I right in thinking that you are acquainted with Simpson.  
**Countess** Simmy ? - Why yes - of course - my daddy and his daddy were old friends, we used to play together when we were little.  
**Gwend** And this is the first time you've met since childhood ?  
**Countess** Good heavens no - we had a torrid affair a few years ago !  
**Marreau** You and Simpson ?!  
**Countess** Yes, that's right - didn't we darling ?  
**Simpson** [*Re-emerging from behind screen*] Oh yes, I'd forgotten about that !  
**Marreau** So why did you marry Fluffy - er the count ?  
**Countess** Money really - yes, just the money - oh and the title of course.  
**Simpson** I did wonder where you'd gone to.  
**Countess** Sorry dearest, should have left you a note, I suppose.  
**Simpson** Never mind - I got over it.  
**Marreau** Well, most enlightening as this is, I fear it is getting us no nearer finding your missing jewels.  
**Gwend** I think we ought to talk to Havelock, see if he has any ideas.  
**Marreau** Exactly what I was going to suggest. I will ring for him. [*Pulls bell rope*]  
**Countess** Simmy, would you like to show me round the garden ?  
**Simpson** Oh. Gosh. Yes. Why not !!!

[**Exit Simpson & Countess**]

**Gwend** Well it seems unlikely that the countess is involved, with the jewels not being insured.  
**Marreau** Indeed my dear Gwendolyn, I think that she is beyond suspicion. Poor woman, fancy losing everything like that. I must find these jewels or as she says she will be prostitute.  
**Gwend** Destitute, Marreau.  
**Marreau** Destitute, prostitute, same thing *n'est-ce pas*  
**Gwend** Not quite, Marreau !

[**Havelock enters**] [**He is very 'superior' in his attitude**]

**Havelock** You rang sir ?  
**Marreau** Ah, Havelock, I would like to ask you a few questions - do have a seat.  
**Havelock** I would rather stand sir, if it's all the same to you.  
**Marreau** Aha, your English correctness - a sitting butler gathers no moss - yes ?  
**Havelock** Indeed sir, there is probably a saying along those lines.  
**Gwend** Now then Havelock - I wonder if you'd mind giving us your impressions.  
**Havelock** Now madam ?  
**Gwend** Is there a problem ?  
**Havelock** Well no madam, if you insist.  
**Gwend** I do.  
**Havelock** Very well - which would you like first ? Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd or Charlie Chaplain ?  
**Marreau** What ?!!!  
**Gwend** [*laughs*] That isn't quite what I meant.  
**Marreau** [*rattled & confused*] Who are all these people - are there more guests that I have not been told about ? Who is this Busting Chaplain ? Are the clergy involved ? *Sacre Bleu* - what is going on ?!!!  
**Gwend** Calm down Marreau; Havelock got the wrong end of the stick.

**Marreau** What stick ? [*Pause*][*An idea, albeit the wrong one, dawns*] Ah - Aha - Now I see - A stick of dynamite, So - you intended to blow the safe up, but getting hold of the wrong end of the stick you were forced to remove the whole safe. Now I understand !

**Gwend** For heaven's sake Marreau - you say I jump to conclusions.

**Havelock** Shall I clarify the situation madam ?

**Gwend** Go ahead. - Good luck !

**Havelock** [*Very calmly*] Monsieur Marreau, the misunderstanding engendered by your misapprehension of the colloquialism employed by your able amanuensis resulted from the prior terminological hybridisation of the word 'impression' to refer not only to perceived conceptions but also to characterisations of the famous by way of mimicry. Unfortunately I misconstrued this initial proposition, understanding the requirement to be for the latter.

**Marreau** [*Pause (he doesn't realise Havelock has finished)*] I see. [*he patently doesn't*]

**Gwend** Well I'm glad we've got that sorted out.

**Marreau** Indeed, we shall come back to the question of the stick later, for the mean time let us concentrate on what happened last night.

**Havelock** That would seem a most wise avenue of investigation, sir.

**Marreau** From my assistant's account, it would seem that the burglary took place at about two in the morning - what were you doing at this time.

**Havelock** I was in bed sir, asleep.

**Marreau** Alone ?

**Havelock** Naturally sir, I am unmarried.

**Marreau** Not having an affair with the cook then, - Ay ?

**Havelock** Certainly not, and respectfully, I would prefer it if you did not impugn my reputation in that manner sir.

**Gwend** Yes Marreau, you mustn't assume every butler in England is having an affair with the household's cook, [*slight pause*] - only about eighty per-cent of them are.

**Marreau** Very well. So you heard nothing and saw nothing - correct ?

**Havelock** Quite correct, sir.

**Marreau** So Havelock, have you any ideas who might have stolen the jewels ?

**Havelock** It is hardly for me to say sir.

**Gwend** That sounds as though you *do* suspect someone, Havelock.

**Havelock** Does it madam ? I'm sure that was not my intention.

**Gwend** It may not have been your intention - but it was the - *dare I use the word* - impression you gave.

**Marreau** Come on Havelock, out with it, or I will consider you at the very least an accessory and possibly even the culprit.

**Havelock** With respect sir, you can consider me what you like, you are not a policeman, you are not even British, and therefore have no right to question me, let alone arrest me !

**Marreau** [*Fuming*] Impudence ! How dare you speak to Marreau the great Belgian detective in this way.

**Gwend** *Swiss*, Marreau.

**Marreau** Swiss what ?

**Gwend** Apparently you're Swiss, Marreau, that's what you said earlier.

**Marreau** Do not be ridiculous Gwendolyn - all the world knows that I am French why should I pretend to be Swiss.

**Gwend** [*Gwend gives up this argument with a skyward glance*] I realise you feel that you must be loyal to the family, Havelock, but as it is Lord Smedling himself who has asked Monsieur Marreau to investigate this case, surely your duty is to help in any way you can ?

**Havelock** [*Slight pause*] Very well, [*Pause*] Please realise this is only an opinion, but from the way the dressing-room door was wrenched off, there are only two people who I believe could have used that sort of strength. [*Pause*]

**Gwend** Do go on, this sounds promising.

**Havelock** Well, Captain Ranulph is obviously one of them and Viscount Alexander is the other.

**Marreau** Aha, the so-called Tubby - we will speak to him shortly.

**Gwend** What about Lord Smedling himself ?

**Havelock** Whilst his lordship is remarkable for his age, he is in his seventies and suffers from angina. I am aware of course that the family has fallen on hard times of late, and a million pound's worth of jewellery would be very useful, however I do not believe his lordship could even contemplate robbing a guest.

**Gwend** But Viscount Alexander might, is that what you're saying ?

**Havelock** It is precisely what I am *not* saying, madam, if you understand the nuance.

**Gwend** Very tactful, Mr. Havelock - I think you can go now - unless Monsieur Marreau wishes to ask you any more questions [*Marreau shrugs a 'No'*] - very well, thank-you you've been very helpful.

**Havelock** Not at all, madam. [*Makes to leave*]

**Marreau** [*half under his breath, mimicking*] Quite right, not at all !

**Gwend** Oh Havelock, would you mind asking the cook - what's her name ?

**Havelock** Mrs. Johnson.

**Gwend** Yes, would you please ask Mrs. Johnson to come up and have a word with us ?

**Havelock** Very good, madam. [**Exits**]

**Marreau** [*waits for Havelock to leave*] What a pompous man - a servant at that.

**Gwend** A highly intelligent servant - and a very shrewd one too I would say; I wouldn't be at all surprised if he didn't know rather more than he's saying.

**Marreau** Oh ?

**Gwend** Just a feeling really, I can't quite put my finger on it.

**Marreau** What is this thing you wish to press, Gwendolyn ?

**Gwend** [*baffled look*] I don't want to press anything - what are you talking about Marreau ?

**Marreau** This thing you wish to put your finger on, presumably it is something which requires pressing, a button or a knob perhaps ?

**Gwend** I realise Marreau that you come from a foreign country, but sometimes I wonder if you're from the same planet as the rest of us !

**Marreau** Whatever do you mean ?

**[Mrs Johnson enters, Simpson re-enters and sits at table (back of stage)]**

**MrsJohnson** I hope you'll be quick about this, I've got things cookin' that'll spoil if I don't get back and look after them.

**Marreau** The staff in this household are very impertinent !

**MrsJohnson** We ain't incontinent, regular as clockwork we are.....

**Marreau** No, no, no - you misunderstand .....

**MrsJohnson** I suppose you're blaming my cooking - well I can't help it if you've got the trots ....

**Marreau** *Trots ?*

**MrsJohnson** If your foreign bowels can't take to good English cooking - well that's your fault for comin' over here.

**Marreau** What ?

**MrsJohnson** I suppose you want those horrible slimy snails and those frogs-legs, can't take a bit of good British beef.

**Marreau** Actually I'm very partial to your British beef.

**Simpson** Yes you can't beat a bit of best British beef.

**MrsJohnson** Well that's a good job, 'coz. you're having it tonight - Beef Wellington.

**Marreau** Aha ! Now we get to it - You are an impostor - making Beef Wellington in order to gain access to the house - just as I suspected !

**Gwend** Hold on Marreau !

**Marreau** No ! No holding on - she has admitted it - she has been casing the joint so that the burglars could come and go freely.....

**Simpson** [*Stands*] Saints alive ! Shall I handcuff her Marreau ?

**Gwend** Sit down Simpson. [*he sits*] Marreau, you're barking up the wrong tree .....

**MrsJohnson** Barking mad more like !

**Marreau** Barking ? Barking ? Are you suggesting that I am a dog ! Gwendolyn whatever has got into you ?

**Gwend** There is absolutely no connection whatsoever between Mrs. Johnson cooking Beef Wellington and the burglary. You're confused Marreau ....

**Marreau** So what's all this about me being a dog ? It is not very nice to call someone a dog - especially when he is from the aristocracy !

**Gwend** No-one's calling you a dog, Marreau - it's a saying "Barking up the wrong tree" it means you've jumped to the wrong conclusion.

**MrsJohnson** Anyway can I get back to my cooking now ?

**Marreau** We haven't asked you any questions yet

**MrsJohnson** Well get on with it would you or my jam roolly-polly is going to be ruined.

**Simpson** I love jam roolly-polly. Are you doing thick custard with it ?

**MrsJohnson** Of course.

**Marreau** Jam polly-rolly ? What is this "polly-rolly" ?

**Gwend** It's a type of sponge pudding, Marreau.

**Marreau** Yughk - you say we French eat strange things.

**Gwend** It's rather nice actually, Marreau.

**MrsJohnson** [*defensively*] It's lovely - my jam roolly polly.

**Marreau** In France we *wash* with sponges - we do not eat them !

**MrsJohnson** Is he completely barmy ?

**Gwend** No, just French ! Hemlock - its not a sea sponge it's --- oh, never mind -

**Simpson** I thought you were Belgian, Marreau !

**Marreau** We are straying from the subject. Mrs. Johnson, what were you doing between midnight and three this morning ?

**MrsJohnson** I was in bed asleep - not that I see that it's any of your business.

**Gwend** You didn't hear any strange noises or anything ?

**MrsJohnson** No - only Mr. Havelock snoring - but that's hardly strange - you get used to it after a while.

**Marreau** Aha - so if you heard Mr. Havelock snoring, you could not have been asleep !

**MrsJohnson** Well we both went to bed at about midnight, and I suppose Mr. Havelock fell asleep first and me a few minutes later.

**Gwend** So can you tell us any more ?

**MrsJohnson** No, not really, I woke at about six this morning, but it wasn't 'till nine when Rose took the countess her tea up that we realised something had happened.

**Gwend** Who do you think might have done it ?

**MrsJohnson** Well, I think it was Captain Ranulph, he's such a nasty man, I hope you lock him up for ever ! I can't think why dear Lady Theresa ever married him.

**Gwend** So what do you base your suspicions on ?

**MrsJohnson** Well just that he's so nasty really.

**Simpson** Sounds fair enough to me.

**Gwend** I don't think it would guarantee a prosecution though, do you Marreau.

**Marreau** Unfortunately not, I fear we may have to collect a little evidence first.

**MrsJohnson** Well suit yourselves - but I still think he did it.

**Gwend** What about Viscount Alexander, d'you think he could have done it ?

**MrsJohnson** What ? No ! Dear little Alexander ! He wouldn't do a thing like that - he's far too nice.

**Gwend** Again, hardly a rock solid defence I would venture.

**Simpson** I say, can I smell burning ?

**[They all sniff a few times]**

**MrsJohnson** Me jam roolly-polly **[Exits at speed]**

**[[ Blackout ]]**

# Act I Scene 3

Scene - the same.

Before the lights go up there is the sound of Simpson counting slowly from about 30 +.

The lights rise. Marreau is sitting on the sofa, musing. Gwendolyn is sitting in armchair perusing her notes [S.L.] Simpson is S.L. between the armchair & sofa, doing press-ups.

Gwend Simpson ?

Simpson 33 - {Gasp}

Gwend Simpson !

Simpson 34 - {Gulp}

Gwend For God's sake Simpson.

Simpson 35 - {Collapses}

Gwend Is there any particular reason why you've suddenly become so active, Simpson.

Simpson No, no, just want to keep in trim.

Gwend Nothing to do with the athletic countess Kitty, perchance.

Simpson [*Breathlessly*] Gosh, how ever did you know that Gwenders ?

Gwend Simpson, ever since you met the countess, you've been either wandering around like a lovesick spaniel or apparently training for a world title fight.

Simpson Oh dear, really, have I ?

Marreau Yes, Simpson, you have - and it is beginning to send me - how you say - pineapple !

Gwend Bananas

Marreau Ah, yes, bananas, thank-you Gwendolyn. Mind you, I think pineapple is just as good - I do not see why the banana has to be singled out.

Simpson Oh no Marreau. I think it has to be a banana - I suppose a mango might be alright but I can't really imagine anyone going grapefruit or blackcurrant, what do you think Gwendolyn ?

Gwend [*she looks at them with incredulity*] If you two insist on having ridiculous conversations about fruit, fair enough - however don't expect me to contribute.

Marreau Very well Gwendolyn - if that is the way you feel - [*pause*] well Simpson, I think aubergine would be quite appropriate.

Simpson But it's not a fruit Marreau, it's a vegetable.

Marreau So - I do not see why even vegetables should be excluded.

Gwend Oh for heaven's sake - are neither of you interested in solving this burglary ?

Marreau Ah yes, of course - Simpson, we shall return to the question of the bananas another time: Who do you think we ought to interview next Gwendolyn ?

Gwend Well I think Ranulph might be worth questioning.

[Parkhurst enters]

Parkhurst Begging your pardons, but his lordship has been taken rather ill and has retired to bed. He was asking how you were getting on with your investigation sir.

Marreau I am sorry to hear of his lordship's ill health, please convey my best wishes and tell him the case is going very well.

Gwend *Is it ?*

Marreau Quiet Gwendolyn.

Parkhurst Thank-you sir, I will inform his lordship. [*turns to go*]

Gwend Oh, Parkhurst - would you ask Captain Ranulph to join us please.

Parkhurst Oh dear, very well. [*Exit*]

Gwend Well the general consensus seems to be that even if Ranulph didn't do it, everyone would like him to go to prison !

Marreau Indeed he does not seem to be very popular.

Simpson Kitty doesn't like him either.

Gwend Oh ?

Simpson Yes, apparently he behaved in a very ungentlemanly way towards her.

Gwend Really - do go on.

Simpson I don't know any more.

Gwend Wouldn't she tell you ?

Simpson I didn't ask actually - but if Kitty says he was ungentlemanly then he must be a cad !

**[Parkhurst, stooping, re-enters with Ranulph]**

Ranulph Who's a cad [*swipes Parkhurst with riding crop*]

(Parkhurst Aggggh)

Simpson Oh no-one in particular.

Ranulph Damned good job - you know what I'd do to a cad [*swipes Parkhurst*]

(Parkhurst Aggggh)

Simpson Well yes - I can imagine.

Ranulph What are you gawping at Parkhurst [*swipes Parkhurst*]

(Parkhurst Aggggh)

Marreau Why do you hit the footman ? Has he done something wrong ?

Ranulph He was born wasn't he - that was his first mistake - wasn't it Parkhurst ?

Parkhurst Yes sir, whatever you say sir.

Ranulph Grovelling little sycophant [*Swipes Parkhurst*]

(Parkhurst Aggggh)

Gwend I think you can probably go now Parkhurst.

Parkhurst Thank-you madam [**backs out, Exit**]

Gwend Do you think it's right to treat the staff that way ?

Ranulph Of course it's right. It's the only language they understand.

Gwend Well I think you're cruel !

Ranulph Well you're only a woman so you would.

Gwend Only a woman !!! [*During the following Gwend is quietly fuming*]

Marreau I am afraid, Captain Ranulph, that my secretary is one of these new independent type of women - she considers herself to be the equal of any man - myself excepted of course.

Ranulph Does she by gad, well you ought to give her a good whipping every now and then - that'd soon put her in her place.

Simpson I don't think you've quite got the measure of Gwendolyn, actually, Ranulph.

Ranulph Who was asking you ? And if you're addressing me, you little pip-squeak, you will call me Captain.

**[Simpson's attitude suddenly changes] [He walks purposefully up to Ranulph]**

Simpson Well, in that case Captain - you had better call me *Major* - or Sir !

Gwendolyn & Marreau What !!

Ranulph Oh !

Gwend You're a *Major*, Simpson ?

**[Simpson returns to his normal affable character]**

Simpson Oh, sorry Gwenders didn't you know ?

Marreau You have never mentioned it before, Simpson.

Simpson Oh - I don't suppose there's been a need - I like my friends calling me Simpson, I don't believe in using titles ...

Ranulph [*To Simpson*] I'm terribly sorry about the little misunderstanding, Major ! [*Pause*]

[*Sudden thought*] Good grief ! You're not Major Simpson of the 35th Hussars are you ?

Simpson Um, that's me.

Marreau You have heard of our friend then ?

Ranulph Heard of him ? He's a legend.

Simpson Oh, I wouldn't go that far !

Gwend A legend ? Simpson ? Are you sure we're talking about the same person ?

Ranulph Well, Major, were you the hero of the siege of Peshwari ?

Simpson Well, you know, I wouldn't say hero exactly.

Ranulph You saved four hundred men that day - I think that's pretty dashed heroic !

Simpson Well it seemed the right thing to do really !

Gwend Simpson !!! That's wonderful [*Gwend goes over to him and kisses him*]

Simpson Oh I say, *Gosh* !!

Marreau This is how you say a revolution.

Gwend I think you mean revelation, actually Marreau, and I couldn't agree more.

Simpson Oh, stop making a fuss everyone. I'm just simple Simon Simpson these days.

Gwend [*With a twinkle*] How am I ever going to be nasty to you again ?

Simpson I'm sure you'll find a way Gwenders !

Marreau Well, astonishing though this is, I think we had better get back to the question of the robbery.

Ranulph Ah, so that's why you wanted to speak to me - see if I've got any ideas.

Marreau Indeed Captain, so - can you help us ?

Ranulph I think it was Havelock and Parkhurst together.

Gwend Oh ? What is your reasoning ?

Ranulph Well, I don't trust either of them. Shifty eyes.

Gwend I'm afraid, Captain, that shifty eyes are not actually illegal.

Ranulph They're always talking together - in whispers - I think they're in cahoots.

Marreau Incahoots ? What is an Incahoot ?

Simpson It's an ancient South American tribe.

Gwend Those are Incas - there is no such thing as an Incahoot - he said that they are in [*slight pause*] cahoots.

Marreau Ah - aha - I see, these cahoots - they are some kind of footwear ?

Gwend What ? No - to be in [*slight pause*] cahoots means to be in league, in partnership.

Marreau Ah - it is becoming clear.

Ranulph And of course Parkhurst is a convicted felon.

All: What ?

Gwend Do you know this for certain ?

Ranulph Oh yes - it's no secret !

Marreau Then why on earth was he employed.

Ranulph He was his lordship's batman in the war; then after the war he got in with some bad types and ended up in prison. On his release, his lordship felt sorry for him and offered him a job.

Gwend I see, and what was he in prison for ?

Ranulph Well this is the interesting bit - Safe-cracking.

Marreau Sacre Bleu ! - Let us apprehend him immediately !

Simpson Hold on Marreau - if he's a safe-cracker, why did he steal the safe - why not simply break into it ?

Marreau That is a good point, Simpson.

Gwend Well not really; if the safe had been cracked it would obviously point to Parkhurst - so he'd be better off stealing it and opening it later.

Ranulph Just what I'd been thinking - your secretary is quite intelligent - for a woman. [*Gwend glowers at him*]

Marreau Thank-you captain, your information is most enlightening.

Ranulph Is that all then ?

Gwend Before you go - just so that we know where everybody was - what were you doing between midnight and three this morning ?

Ranulph [*Whipping the chair*] You're not suggesting I had something to do with this scandal, are you ?

Gwend We are asking everyone where they were.

Ranulph Oh; very well. Well I played cards with Tubby 'til about one, then I went to bed. Theresa was asleep but she woke up when I got into bed, so she can confirm that.

Marreau Did you go straight to sleep.

Ranulph Well not straight to sleep exactly.

Marreau Oh ?

Ranulph Well you know .....

Marreau No I'm afraid I don't.

Gwend Marreau - I think we can leave it at that.

Marreau Can we ? - I think it might be important to find out why the Captain did not go straight to sleep. Perhaps the banging kept him awake !

[Gwend goes over to Marreau and whispers in his ear]

Marreau Ah, oh, I see. Yes - of course - well that'll be all - thank-you Captain.

Ranulph Shall I go and beat a confession out of Parkhurst ?

Marreau No, no, no !!! You must not go around beating suspects - it is not the way to go about things.

Ranulph Well I think I'll get on old Dasher and go and shoot something then.

Gwend As long as it's not human !

Ranulph What ? Oh yes, I see. [**Exits**]

**Marreau** What a strange man.  
**Gwend** "*Only a woman*" indeed - Hmph !  
**Marreau** You must not be so touchy Gwendolyn. After all you *are* only a woman !  
**Gwend** That better have been an attempt at a joke Marreau !  
**Simpson** I say, hadn't we better arrest this Parkhurst fellow.  
**Gwend** Well I certainly think it's time we had a word with him.  
**Marreau** Yes, indeed. However before doing so I would like to view the scene of the crime again -

**[Havelock appears at door, unseen by all]**

**Marreau** Shall we have a look ?  
**Havelock** Shall we what sir ?  
**Marreau** What ?  
**Havelock** I thought I heard you suggest we did something, sir.  
**Marreau** No, if I want you to do something, I will ask you.  
**Havelock** Very good sir. [*Exits, muttering "Stupid French ..."*]  
**Gwend** Yes, I'd like to have a look myself.  
**Havelock** [*re-appears*] Madam ?  
**Gwend** Yes ?  
**Havelock** I thought - Oh never mind. [**Exits**]  
**Simpson** I say, Havelock's behaving very strangely.  
**Marreau** Quite, I think there may be something in Ranulph's theory. Let us view the scene of the crime.

**[Exeunt Omnes]**

**[[ Blackout ]]**

# Act II Scene 1

Scene - the same.

Marreau is seated in armchair [S.L.]

Gwendolyn is sitting on sofa studying her notes.

Simpson is seated in armchair [S.R.]

Marreau Havelock's taking his time finding Parkhurst.

Gwend Yes, if they really are in league I wonder if it was advisable to ask Havelock to find him.

Marreau Sacre Bleu Of course, he may - how you say - dump him the blink !

Gwend Tip him the wink, I think you mean, Marreau.

Marreau I am sorry my dear, my little red cells, they are not functioning very well today.

[Havelock enters, head bowed]

Havelock Grave news ! Lamentable news !

Gwend Whatever's wrong Havelock ?

Havelock His lordship has passed on.

Gwendolyn & Simpson Good heavens.

Marreau His lordship has passed what on ?

Gwend He's dead Marreau.

Marreau Who's dead ?

Gwend His lordship of course, who else ?

Marreau How do you know ?

Gwend Havelock just said so.

Marreau Did he ? I only heard him saying that his lordship had passed something somewhere.

Simpson I think I can help here, Marreau - "Passed on" means he's died.

Marreau You have some very strange sayings in this country !

Gwend What did he die of, Havelock ?

Havelock He just slipped away - the doctor is on his way now - hopefully he will ascertain the cause of death.

[Theresa enters, crying]

Theresa Oh, poor daddy. *[sob]* *[She sits on sofa]*

Simpson *[sits next to Theresa, puts his arm round her]* There, there.

[The Countess enters]

Countess Simmy - how could you !

Simpson What ?

Countess As soon as my back is turned, there you are cuddling with another woman.

Simpson But !

Countess I'm glad I left you for Fluffy. It's all you deserve. **[Exit]**

Simpson But !

[Rose rushes in, distraught][She has a strong Irish accent]

Rose Holy Mary, mother of God !

Havelock Calm down, Rose. Nothing can be done about his lordship now.

Rose It's not his lordship !

Marreau What isn't his lordship ?

Rose It's the Captain.

Marreau Of course the Captain isn't his lordship ! Whatever do you mean ?

Theresa Oh what's Ranulph done now ?

Rose He's lost his head m'lady.

**Theresa** Well that's nothing new - he's always losing his head over something.

**Rose** [*Calming down*] No, m'lady, you don't understand - he's really lost it this time.

**Gwend** Whatever has he done - Oh he's not beaten poor Parkhurst senseless has he.

**Rose** [*Calm*] No, you're still not following me are you. I can tell y'know by the way you don't seem to be that bothered.

**Marreau** Well compared to the death of his lordship, this does seem a trifle unimportant.

**Rose** Alright, I'll try and make it clear. Captain Ranulph is lying on the ground with his horse wandrin' about all over the place, and the Captain's head which, as you know, used to be on his shoulders is some yards away !

**Simpson** { [*Looks ill and holds stomach*] }

**Theresa** { [*Wails*] } }

**Marreau** { Sacre Bleu ! } } [*Simultaneously*]

**Gwend** { Good grief ! } }

**Havelock** { What !! [**Exits**] }

**Marreau** Wait for me ! Do not move anything ! [**Exits**]

**Theresa** [*Wailing*]

**Gwend** Rose, take Lady Theresa into the drawing room and make her a strong cup of black coffee.

**Rose** Right-you-are Miss Bayne, I'll do that.

**Simpson** Would you get me some bicarb. please Rose.

**Rose** To be sure.

[**Rose & Theresa exit**] [**Theresa is sobbing**]

**Gwend** Does Rose remind you of anyone ?

**Simpson** [*Muses*] Can't say as she does.

**Gwend** Oh well, never mind.

**Simpson** I don't think Ranulph's going to be greatly missed !

**Gwend** No, I think you're right there.

[**Viscount Alexander enters (actually now the Marquess, due to his father's death)**]

**Alexander** Well this is a rum do !

**Gwend** Oh, Marquess, I'm so sorry to hear of your father and brother-in-law's deaths.

**Simpson** Me too.

**Alexander** I'm not the Marquess, that was ( ... my father) - oh - I suppose I am now ! Well for Heaven's sake call me Tubby like everyone else. Viscount Alexander was bad enough, but Marquess of Penge is outrageous.

**Simpson** Just what I was saying, all these titles - silly aren't they.

**Alexander** To be honest, I'm rather upset about father, but as for old Ranulph, I can't say I'm sorry to see him go and kill himself.

**Simpson** What ? You mean it was suicide ?

**Alexander** No, no - Marreau's out there taking measurements all over the place, but it looks like a riding accident to me.

**Simpson** Good grief ! I've never seen anyone's head come off after a fall, and I've played polo in India.

**Alexander** No it wasn't a fall, it seems Dasher went out of control and galloped under a low branch !

**Gwend** Oh, nasty !

**Simpson** I wish Rose would hurry up with that bicarb.

**Gwend** I don't think you're the only one who'll not mourn his passing.

**Alexander** No, not a likeable chap, old Ranulph. Oh well, I suppose one shouldn't speak ill of the dead.

[**Marreau re-enters**]

**Marreau** Ah, Viscount - or should I say Marquess, I am glad you are here.

**Alexander** We've been through this once, Monsieur Marreau, please just call me Tubby.

**Marreau** I cannot call a Marquess "Tubby" - it is disrespectful, it would be like someone calling me "Frenchy"

**Gwendolyn & Simpson** They do !

**Marreau** What !

**Alexander** Well call me Alexander then.

**Marreau** [*slight pause*] Very well, if you insist. Now then Monsieur Tubby, I think there is no doubt that Captain Ranulph's death was in fact murder.

**All:** What !!!

**Alexander** But surely Dasher dashed under the dashed tree and bashed old Ranulph's block off !

**Marreau** In this you are quite correct.

**Gwend** This sounds interesting Marreau - how do you make it out to be murder ?

**Marreau** Two things, my dear Gwendolyn. Firstly there was a massive blow to the back of his head, far more severe than would have happened if his head had simply been knocked off and bounced along the ground for a while.

**Simpson** [*Dashes towards screen, clutching stomach*]

**Gwend** Not behind the screen, Simpson !

**Simpson** Oh ! [*Dashes offstage, clutching stomach*] Rose ! Rose !

**Marreau** Secondly, there were traces of cord or rope on his riding boots and faint but discernible cord marks on his wrists.

**Gwend** Good Heavens, Marreau, you've excelled yourself. So Ranulph was coshed on the back of his head, tied onto Dasher, and then presumably the murderer panicked Dasher into charging under the low branch.

**Marreau** Precisely my dear Gwendolyn. What is more there are marks in the ground where it is obvious that the horse took fright. The murderer then went to the body, removed the cords and Ranulph's body fell to the ground. An apparent accident. Except to the Great Marreau !

**Alexander** Well I'll eat my hat !

**Marreau** What is the purpose of eating your hat, Monsieur Tubby ? Does it hide some valuable clue ?

**Alexander** What on earth do you mean Marreau, it was just an exclamation. Why should I want to hide clues.

**Marreau** Because Marquess Tubby, you are chief suspect !

**Alexander** Me ! Great Scott ! Don't be ridiculous !

**Marreau** Do you deny that you had a violent row with Ranulph shortly before he died ?

**Alexander** Well, yes - I mean no - I mean I don't deny it, but I didn't murder him. I was just telling him that I was fed up with all the scenes he was making.

**Marreau** Good, I am glad you have admitted to having the argument. I will give you the benefit of the doubt for now, but you mustn't leave the house.

**Alexander** No, of course. I tell you I didn't do it though.

**Marreau** Would you leave us for now, I may want to talk to you later.

**Alexander** Very well, I suppose I had better call the police.

**Marreau** Yes, I am afraid we cannot keep this beneath our berets any longer.

**Alexander** Well - quite. [**Exit**]

**Gwend** Rotor arms, Marreau ?

**Marreau** Just so, my dear.

**[Simpson re-enters, he is holding a large paper bag behind his back.]**

**Simpson** Sorry about rushing out like that - the old gippy tummy y'know. Old Tubby looked a bit flushed just now.

**Gwend** Not surprising, Marreau has just informed him that he's chief suspect.

**Simpson** Oh I say.

**Gwend** Well I'll pop out and get the rotor arms shall I ?

**Simpson** No need.

**Gwend** Oh ? Why ?

**Simpson** Well I knew you'd want them so I've just whipped round and taken them all out for you.

**Gwend** Well done Simpson - what on earth's happened to you ? You've suddenly become quite intelligent.

**Simpson** Have I, oh, Gosh, thank-you Gwendolyn.

**Gwend** And you called me Gwendolyn, I don't know whether I can take all this in !

**Simpson** Oh, I couldn't get the top off one of the things.

**Marreau** One of which things, Simpson ?

**Simpson** The things that the rotor arm goes round inside.

**Gwend** That's called the distributor, Simpson.

**Simpson** Oh, right. Well I couldn't get the top off, so I took the whole thing off.

**[Presents them with a complete distributor, which he produces from the paper bag]**

**Gwend** Oh good grief !

**Marreau** If I am not mistaken, that is the distributor from a 1928 Benz Landau, is it not ?  
**Simpson** Yes, Marreau; well spotted.  
**Marreau** In fact, would I not be right in saying that it is in fact the distributor from *my* 1928 Benz Landau !!!  
**Simpson** Ah, Gosh, yes - I suppose it is !  
**Gwend** Well done Simpson !  
**Marreau** Oh, *Zut Alors* do you not realise that we will now need a mechanic to come out to put it back in correctly.  
**Simpson** Oh, really ? It came out easily enough !  
**Gwend** Don't worry Marreau, I'll put it back and set the timing up for you !  
**Marreau** You can do this, Gwendolyn ?  
**Gwend** Of course; I'm *only a woman* after all !  
**Simpson** Crikey Gwenders, you are clever !  
**Gwend** I know !  
**Marreau** Anyway, as Simpson has made sure that no-one can leave, *particularly me*, I think it is time to resume my investigations, especially as this simple robbery has turned into murder.  
**Gwend** Yes, we were going to find out what Parkhurst has to say for himself, weren't we.  
**Marreau** Indeed my dear Gwendolyn.

**[Havelock enters]**

**Havelock** Monsieur Marreau, the doctor would like to have a word with you if that is convenient.  
**Marreau** By all means, show him in.

**[Doctor Protheroe enters]**

**Protheroe** Ah, Marreau, we meet again !  
**Marreau** Doctor Protheroe, what are you doing here ?  
**Protheroe** After the hamster business, Jane and I got married and moved out here to be nearer Little Jimmy's borstal.  
**Marreau** Ah, I see, very compassionate.  
**Gwend** How is little Jimmy.  
**Protheroe** Well he's on the run at the moment ! Escaped dressed as a cleaning maid.  
**Simpson** Good heavens !  
**Marreau** When was this ?  
**Protheroe** Oh; a few weeks ago. I should think the police will catch him soon.  
**Marreau** Indeed, let us hope he does not get up to any more mischief while he is out.  
**Protheroe** Quite; little perisher !  
**Gwend** Um!  
**Marreau** What do you mean Um!  
**Gwend** Oh, nothing Marreau, I'll tell you later. So, doctor, what did his lordship die of ?  
  
**Protheroe** Well, after a brief examination it would appear that his lordship suffered an embolism in the cardiovascular system occasioned by the administration of an arsenical toxin.  
**All:** (Gosh, Sacre Bleu, Zounds etc.)  
**Marreau** Are you sure ?  
**Protheroe** No doubt about it. Until laboratory tests have been carried out, I can't be certain exactly what poison was used, but I'm pretty sure it was arsenic.  
**Marreau** Oh ?  
**Protheroe** Probably white arsenic - that is Arsenic Oxide in fact, obtained from the roasting of arsenic ores ....  
**Marreau** Thank-you doctor ...  
**Protheroe** Yes, fascinating element, arsenic, it appears in three forms you know ...  
**Marreau** [*Bored already*] Does it really ... ?  
**Protheroe** Yes, Alpha - that's yellow arsenic - is an allotropic modification of arsenic formed by the rapid condensation of arsenic vapour in an inert atmosphere ...  
**Marreau** [*Frustrated*] Fascinating !  
**Protheroe** ... whereas black arsenic, which is far denser than its yellow cousin, with a specific gravity of 3.7 as opposed to 2.0, may be formed by the *slow* condensation of arsenic vapour - [*Pause*] - in an inert atmosphere of course.  
**Marreau** [*Almost asleep*] Most enlightening.

**Protheroe** However, I tend to think that it was indeed the white variety that dispatched his lordship.  
**Marreau** [*Jumping at the opportunity to speak*] Well, we appear to have two murders on our hands.  
**Gwend** I wonder why anyone would want to kill poor old Lord Smedling.  
**Protheroe** I have no idea. I witnessed the will recently, and apart from some little gifts to the staff, the only people who could possibly gain financially are his children, and I can't imagine either of them murdering their father.  
**Simpson** No I can't see old Tubby doing a thing like that either, let alone Theresa.  
**Marreau** Well thank-you for this important information, Doctor Protheroe. I will not detain you any longer.

[**Protheroe turns to leave**]

**Simpson** I hope little Jimmy turns up safe and well.  
**Protheroe** Thank-you Mr. Simpson. [*Exit*]

**Marreau** Well this is a pretty pot of herrings !  
**Gwend** Very picturesque Marreau, the saying is "kettle of fish"  
**Marreau** Aha, nearly right.  
**Gwend** Yes, you're getting better. [*Pause*] Marreau ?  
**Marreau** Yes, my dear.  
**Gwend** Does Rose remind you of anyone.  
**Marreau** [*Thinks*] No, I can't say she does.  
**Gwend** Oh, alright, never mind.

[**Havelock enters**]

**Havelock** Excusing me, but there has been a rather nasty occurrence.  
**Marreau** Oh ?  
**Havelock** I am afraid Parkhurst has committed suicide !  
**All:** What !  
**Havelock** I fear that he was responsible for the theft and the murders and believing that you were on to him decided to take his own life.  
**Gwend** That is rather a bold supposition, Havelock. How did he kill himself ?  
**Havelock** A twelve-bore shotgun - very messy I'm afraid.  
**Simpson** [*Exits clutching stomach*] Rose ! Rose !  
**Marreau** A twelve-bore shotgun, hey, I did not hear the shot.  
**Havelock** You wouldn't have sir, it happened well out into the estate.  
**Gwend** How do you know it was suicide and not an accident - or murder ?  
**Havelock** There are powder burns on his hands which suggests to me that he shot himself.  
**Marreau** I see. I trust you have left everything undisturbed.  
**Havelock** Naturally sir. As you will see, the gun is a little way from him, probably due to the recoil.  
**Marreau** I think you can leave the deductions to me actually, Havelock.  
**Havelock** As you please, sir.  
**Marreau** By the way - who's gun is it ?  
**Havelock** It is one of late Captain Ranulph's sir. A Grembling's over & under mach 37 b.  
**Marreau** Gwendolyn - I think we should view the scene.

[**Blackout** ]]

## Act II Scene 2

Scene - the same.

Lights rise on an empty room.

Gwendolyn enters, followed by Marreau.

Gwend So, Marreau, looks like another murder !

Marreau Oh, you do not think Parkhurst took his own life ?

Gwend Come on Marreau - when someone decides to shoot themselves with a twelve-bore shotgun, one shot would seem to be a sufficient number !

Marreau You are saying there were *two* shots, how do you know ? There was an unused cartridge in the lower barrel.

Gwend Precisely, but if you had looked down the barrels you would have seen that they had identical powder residues - they had both been recently fired.

Marreau So why was there an unused cartridge still in the gun ?

Gwend Because the murderer had reloaded the gun to make it look like suicide. I doubt Parkhurst would have been able to reload it !

Marreau Sacre bleu ! Sometimes you can be quite useful, Gwendolyn.

Gwend Just now and then, Marreau.

[Simpson enters]

Simpson All sewn up then is it Marreau ?

Marreau No, my dear friend, the knitting has only just begun.

Simpson So Parkhurst didn't do it ?

Marreau I have just deduced that Parkhurst was murdered.

Gwend *You've* just deduced it ?

Marreau Erm - with a little help from Gwendolyn.

[Rose enters]

Rose Excusing me, but there's a man at the door says that he's policeman - I can't say as he looks like a policeman to me, but that's what he says he is. I mean policeman have dark suits and helmets - and this one .....

Gwend Alright Rose, thank-you; he'll be a plain-clothed detective - show him in.

Rose Just as you say madam, but don't be surprised if I turn out to be right and he's only pretending to be a policeman.

Gwend We will bear it in mind, Rose - now go and let him in.

Rose Right-you-are. [Exit]

Marreau I'm glad they've sent a detective - do you remember that bumbling idiot who came to Lady Eustace's.

Gwend [Laughs] Sgt. Farmer - there can't be another one like him.

Simpson Oh, I thought he was quite bright !

[Rose re-enters]

Rose Inspector Farmer.

[Ranulph Exits] [Farmer enters]

Farmer By 'eck if it ain't Mr. Marreau again !

Marreau Oh, *nom d'un nom* !!

Farmer So what's this I's been hearin' 'bout a couple o' murders then ?

Simpson Three now !

**Farmer** Three murders ! By 'eck, Little Snodsbury's not 'ad one afore, not in all the time I' been 'ere.  
**Gwend** Just how long have you been here, Sergeant ?  
**Farmer** Inspector now, miss.  
**Gwend** Sorry - *Inspector*.  
**Farmer** Oh, I've been here 'bout six weeks now !  
**Simpson** I say, congratulations on you promotion.  
**Farmer** Well after that 'amster business, they made me up to Inspector and moved me out 'ere. So I s'pose I've got you to thank Mr. Marreau.  
**Marreau** Don't mention it, Inspector.  
**Farmer** Well, who's been doin' these-'ere murders then ?  
**Marreau** I am still in the process of eliminating suspects.  
**Farmer** Looks like someone's doin' that for you ! [*Chortles*]  
**Simpson** I say, that was rather witty.  
**Gwendolyn & Marreau** *Um.*  
**Gwend** Are you going to inspect the bodies this time, Inspector ?  
**Farmer** That depends.  
**Marreau** What d'you mean, it depends ?  
**Farmer** Well, how did these-here people die ?  
**Marreau** His lordship was poisoned ....  
**Gwend** .... Parkhurst was shot ....  
**Simpson** .... And Ranulph was decapitated.  
**Farmer** Decapitated [*sic*], what be that then ?  
**Gwend** His head was knocked off !  
**Farmer** By 'eck, we don't get many of them round 'ere. Well, I'll take a look at the poisoning, but I think I'll leave the other two for now, if it's all the same to you.  
**Gwend** Oh good grief, I trust someone will be coming to remove the bodies.  
**Farmer** Oh yes - I'm just the spearhead - as you might say.  
**Marreau** [*Gesturing towards the door*] Well then Inspector, find Rose, and she will show you up to his lordship's room.  
**Farmer** Right you are. [*Going to leave*] I hope this business don't take too long to clear up - I've got three lost cats to find ! [**Exit**]  
  
**Gwend** [*Musing*] Funnily enough, Farmer just made an astute observation there !  
**Marreau** You are of course joking my dear Gwendolyn.  
**Gwend** No, he said someone was eliminating all the suspects for us.  
**Simpson** Yes, if the murders carry on at this rate, it'll be easy Marreau, the murderer will be the only one still alive.  
**Marreau** Do not be a doubting Simpson, Thomas, [*pause*] Thomas, Simpson, -- Marreau the Magnificent will solve this case before very long.  
**Gwend** So with the field somewhat narrowed, who d'you think did it Marreau ?  
**Marreau** My little red cells, they are formulating an idea ....  
**Gwend** Go on then Marreau ....  
**Marreau** I think there is really only one person who - how you say - fits the William.  
**Gwend** Bill, Marreau - fits the bill.  
**Marreau** Just so, and that person is the new Marquess Tubby of Penge.  
**Simpson** Oh no, I can't see Tubby doing a thing like that.  
**Marreau** I think that Monsieur Tubby was eager for the title, but could not afford the death duties and so he stole the jewels, then he killed his father.  
**Gwend** But why kill Ranulph and Parkhurst.  
**Simpson** Well I wouldn't blame anyone killing Ranulph !  
**Marreau** Indeed, and suppose Parkhurst helped him open the safe, and then started blackmailing him.  
**Gwend** Of course, I think you're onto something there, Marreau - I don't know whether you're right about the Marquess, but that definitely makes sense of Parkhurst's murder.  
**Marreau** Well - if it is not Monsieur Tubby - who else could it be ? [*Pause*]  
*[Intentionally]* How you say - "Tubby or not Tubby that is the question !"  
**Gwend** Very droll, Marreau. How about Havelock ?  
**Marreau** Ah, you are thinking the butler did it.  
**Gwend** Well he'd have been strong enough to break the door down, and I would say he is cool and cunning enough to have carried out the murders.

**Marreau** That's very true, but what motive could he have for the murders ?  
**Gwend** Yes, that *is* the problem. Let's have another word with him. Ring for him would you Marreau.  
**Marreau** Very well my dear. [*Pulls bellcord*]

[**Theresa enters**]

**Theresa** [*Still somewhat distressed*] Ah, Monsieur Marreau, have you found out who killed poor daddy and Ranny yet ?  
**Marreau** I believe we are nearing a conclusion.  
**Gwend** While you're here, Lady Theresa, would you mind helping us with our investigations.  
**Theresa** Of course I will, anything I can do to help.  
**Gwend** I suppose you realise that your husband wasn't exactly popular.  
**Theresa** Yes, I know; but he had a heart of gold really.  
**Gwend** Um. Was there anyone in particular in this house that you would call his enemy.  
**Theresa** I don't think Parkhurst was too fond of him !  
**Gwend** No, but he's dead. Anyone else ?  
**Theresa** Well, he loathed the countess and I think the feeling was mutual.  
**Marreau** Indeed, why was this ?  
**Theresa** I'm not sure, something years ago, in India.  
**Simpson** Really - I remember Kitty was in India for a while, engaged to a chap called Smethurst, got himself killed in a skirmish. Perhaps she met Ranulph then.  
**Gwend** Curiouser and curiouser.  
**Marreau** How does the countess know your family ?  
**Theresa** Oh, through the Hohenhausens. Daddy was vaguely related to the old count, Buffy.  
[*Said quickly*] Fluffy was Buffy's son and Buffy was the brother of the mother of Fifi who was the niece of daddy's cousin, Beatie.  
**Marreau** I see.  
**Theresa** Yes, and when Fluffy went and topped himself, Catherine asked daddy to look after her estate - that's why he wanted to keep the burglary as quiet as possible - though I believe he sent a cable to somewhere in Germany telling them of the theft.  
**Gwend** Ranulph wasn't too fond of Havelock either was he ?  
**Theresa** No, that man has such a superior attitude - it used to infuriate Ranulph.  
**Marreau** Indeed, not to mention the shifting eyes !

[**Havelock enters**]

**Havelock** You rang, sir ?  
**Theresa** Shall I leave you ?  
**Gwend** Yes, if you don't mind, thank-you for your time. [**Theresa exits**]  
Ah, Havelock, when the countess arrived last night who put the jewels in the safe ?  
**Havelock** His lordship did, he was the only person who knew the combination.  
**Gwend** Did the countess go straight to bed then ?  
**Havelock** Well not directly - she made rather a lot of fuss over some flies.  
**Marreau** Flies ?  
**Havelock** Yes sir, flies - she said they were bothering her and she wouldn't be able to get to sleep.  
**Simpson** Yes, dashed nuisance flies can be. Not as bad as mosquitoes though - I remember once in Tangiers .....

**Gwend** Yes, Simpson, very interesting. So what was done about the flies ?  
**Havelock** Well as far as I could see there were only a couple of them buzzing around the light but the countess insisted I festooned the place with fly-paper.  
**Marreau** And did you do this ?  
**Havelock** Indeed sir, it is hardly my place to argue with a countess !  
**Marreau** Quite so, but when I investigated the scene of the burglary there was none of this flying-paper about then.  
**Havelock** No sir, it's such offensive sticky stuff, I took it down and put it in the waste-paper basket.  
**Simpson** Yes, nasty stuff fly-paper - much better off with a mosquito net ! Stops you getting Malaria and things like that !  
**Havelock** Just so, Mr. Simpson, Captain Ranulph always used to sleep under a mosquito net - [*slight pause*] even in Luton !

**Simpson** Can't be too careful with Malaria.  
**Gwend** Marreau, I've got it !  
**Marreau** You have Malaria, Gwendolyn ?!  
**Simpson** Gosh, have you Gwendolyn ? - That's dashed bad luck !  
**Gwend** No, no, no. Not Malaria - *It* !!!  
**Marreau** And what is *it* ?  
**Gwend** The answer Marreau - I know who's responsible !  
**Marreau** Really ! [*Pause*] Of course I was about to say I knew who'd done it too.  
**Gwend** And why they did it ?  
**Marreau** Well, yes of course.  
**Gwend** Right-oh Marreau. Denouement time ! Havelock will you assemble everyone.  
**Havelock** [*Sounds somewhat concerned*] Very good madam - do you really know who's done it ?  
**Gwend** Absolutely, Havelock, there are however a few more questions I need to ask.

[[ **Blackout** ]]

# Act II Scene 3 \* Denouement

Scene - the same.

Everyone is assembled.

Marreau is about to hold court (with Gwendolyn's assistance)

**Marreau** Murder ! Murder most foul - has been committed here not once, not twice, but three times ! First of all, kindly old Lord Smedling is poisoned.

[**Theresa and MrsJohnson** sob]

Then Captain Ranulph is dispatched in a most horrible fashion. [*Theresa sobs loudly*]

And finally poor Parkhurst is shot. [*Theresa & MrsJohnson both wail surprisingly dramatically*]

**Countess** Don't forget my jewels !

**Gwend** Do not worry countess - We have not forgotten about your jewels ! [*Slight pause*] Shall I start the ball rolling, Marreau ?

**Marreau** Indeed my dear, and we have quite a lot of balls don't we Gwendolyn.

**Gwend** You could say that Marreau. [*Slight pause*] Havelock - shortly after the burglary I believe that his late lordship sent a cable to Germany.

**Havelock** That is correct.

**Gwend** Can you tell us where that cable was sent ?

**Havelock** It was to Schönberg and Blüther in Leipzig.

**Gwend** Thank-you.: Mrs Johnson, what did his lordship have to eat and drink today.

**MrsJohnson** Well, he had a couple of nice little kippers this morning for breakfast, and then all he had before 'e died was two cups of tea. [*sniffles*]

**Gwend** And who took the tea up to him ?

**MrsJohnson** [*sniffling*] Rose did both times. You're not saying as I poisoned him are you ? I loved his lordship - I'd never do anything to harm 'im.

**Marreau** No, Mrs Johnson, we do not suspect you.

**MrsJohnson** Well I'm glad about that, I hope your trots are better, Mr. Marreau !

**Marreau** Trots, trots ? What are these trots ?

**Gwend** Never mind, Marreau, I'll explain it to you later - just smile and nod for now ! [*Pause*] Now, Rose ....

**Rose** Now hold on here, you're not supposin' that I might a' done anything are you ? A good Catholic girl like me.

**Gwend** Um, I'll reserve judgement on that !

**Rose** Whatever do you mean ?

**Gwend** Never mind - Did you actually take the tea into his lordship ?

**Rose** Er - no. Lady Theresa took it off me at the door.

**Gwend** [*Surprised*] Lady Theresa ?

**Rose** Yes, she and the Viscount were just going in to see his lordship.

**Gwend** Thank-you Rose.

**Marreau** Who had most to gain from his lordship's death ? Only two people are mentioned in the will. Viscount - now Marquess - Alexander and Lady Theresa.

**Alexander** [*Jumping up*] Now hold on a moment:

**Marreau** No, Marquess Tubby - you hold on. I was about to say that apart from the title and the house there is precious little else to inherit - and so very little motive.

**Alexander** [*Sitting down again*] Ah, I see. Sorry.

**Marreau** However, due to the crippling death duties that would ensue from the death of his lordship then you certainly have a motive for stealing the jewels.

**Alexander** Make your mind up Marreau, do you suspect me or not ?

**Marreau** Yes, Marquess Tubby - I do suspect you !

**Alexander** [*Jumping up again*] What !!! This is preposterous

**Gwend** *Marreau ! [Legs it over to Marreau, whispers in his ear]*

**Marreau** No, Marquess Tubby - I do not suspect you !

**Alexander** Oh, Good. Alright then. [*Sits down again*]

**Marreau** Just my little joke !  
**Alexander** Highly amusing I'm sure !  
**Marreau** The question is - who else needed money and had motive to - how you say - bump off his lordship, Ranulph and Parkhurst ?  
**Simpson** Gosh this is exciting isn't it ?  
**Gwend** Rose, did anyone else go in to see his lordship ?  
**Havelock** I may be able to help here. After the Viscount and Lady Theresa had seen his lordship I went in to inform him that the countess wished to talk over her affairs with him.  
**Marreau** The countess was having an affair with his lordship ?!  
**Countess** Don't be ridiculous !  
**Havelock** You misunderstand sir, business affairs, not *affaires-de-coeur*  
**Marreau** Ah, sorry - I understand - Havelock, I'm sure you would find a million pounds very useful.  
**Havelock** On the contrary sir, I would find a million pounds acutely embarrassing. I think the police might become a little suspicious of a butler who can suddenly afford to buy several castles in Scotland.  
**Mrs.Johnson** You tell'em George.  
**Gwend** Quite right Havelock, however a countess would not be in quite the same predicament would she ?  
**Countess** Are you accusing me of stealing my own jewels ?  
**Marreau & Gwend** [*Simultaneously*] Yes,  
**Gwend** Actually we are !!!  
**All:** What !  
**Simpson** I say ! You don't think little Kitty could have done all this !!!  
**Countess** But that's ridiculous they're not even insured.  
**Marreau** They are not insured in Britain it is true, however I think we will find that Schönberg and Blüther are at this moment contemplating their biggest ever claim.  
**Countess** Damn !  
**Simpson** Kitty !!!  
**Countess** Oh shut-up Simpson !  
**Simpson** Oh, I say !  
**Countess** Alright, I admit the jewels are insured, but you cannot prove I stole them, and I trust you're not accusing me of the murders.  
**Marreau** Yes countess, I'm afraid we are.  
**Countess** But this is preposterous.  
**Marreau** His lordship was the only person who knew that the jewels were insured, and for this reason you felt that you must get rid of him.  
**Countess** Ridiculous.  
**Gwend** You asked Havelock to bring you several strips of fly-paper to get rid of non-existent flies - knowing that fly-paper contains arsenic - the poison that killed Lord Smedling !  
**Alexander** Good heavens !!!  
**Simpson** I say, Kitty -

[**Countess makes a run for it**]

**Gwend** Grab her Simpson  
**Simpson** Right-ho. [*Simpson & Alexander restrain her*]  
**Gwend** As for why you killed Ranulph - that was vengeance. Ranulph had been in charge of the unit in which your fiancé, Lieutenant Smethurst was killed.  
**Countess** How on earth did you know that.

[**Door bell rings, Havelock exits**]

**Marreau** And finally - am I right in thinking that you had paid Parkhurst to take the safe, and when he started blackmailing you, you shot him.  
**Countess** You'll never take me alive ! [*Produces gun*]  
**Gwend** Stop her Simpson !  
 [*Simpson scuffles with The Countess, the gun goes off into the air. He disarms her*]

[\*Production Note: If a blank-firing gun is unavailable, a dagger may be substituted]

**Simpson** One thing Kitty, why did you stage the robbery, why not just sell some of the jewels ?

**Countess** Hah ! You think you're so clever don't you - but you missed one important thing - the jewels were fakes - made of paste - I'd sold the real ones secretly years ago.

[Havelock enters]

**Havelock** Inspector Farmer is here again.

**Marreau** Good, show him in.

[Farmer enters]

**Marreau** Once again, Marreau the Magnificent has solved your case for you, Inspector.

**Farmer** Well that's very nice of you, thank-you Mr. Marreau.

**Marreau** Arrest that lady there on three counts of murder !

**Farmer** Well I'll be an overgrown turnip ! You mean the countess here did it !

\*\*\*\*\* These lines may be omitted or modified if Rose could not pass for a young boy \*\*\*\*\*

**Gwend** Quite so, and Inspector I have one more little surprise for you ! - Rose.

**Rose** Now what is it you're wanting me for ?

**Gwend** About you being a "*good Catholic girl*"

**Rose** Well who's been saying I'm not ?

**Gwend** Not unless you've changed your temperament, faith and sex, [*pause*] Jimmy !

**Rose** [*Removes own wig*] Alright I'll come quietly.

**Farmer** Why if it's not that Little Jimmy - again !

\*\*\*\*\*

**Marreau** You cannot fool Marreau the Magnificent !!!

[[ **Blackout** ]][Curtain]

Marreau returns in : *Marreau and the Curse of Cardiff*