

Marreau and the Tregalleon Inheritance

By Robert Farrow

A detective comedy in three acts. The eighth Marreau adventure.

**First Performance : Wednesday 6th November 2002
The Court Theatre, Pendley, Tring**

Deposited with the British Library Manuscripts Department : Playscript No. 10173

Dramatis Personae

Marreau	The famous continental detective
Simpson	Friend of Marreau
Gwendolyn Smith	Secretary and friend of Marreau
Seth Digory	A gardener (Part may be doubled)
Mrs Dalwithers	The housekeeper
Stanley Tregalleon	The host
Amelia Tregalleon	His sister
James Newport	A guest (distant relation)
Cecil Tregalleon	A cousin of the host
Josephine Tregalleon	Wife of Stanley
Mary White	A nurse
Millicent Clamforge	A guest (distant relation)
Diana Pringle	A guest (distant relation)
Doctor Protheroe	The ubiquitous doctor
Inspector Farmer	A policeman
Mr Big	The family solicitor

Original Cast

Marreau	Ian Wells
Simpson	Jeremy O'Gorman
Gwendolyn Smith	Margaret Sabatini
Seth Digory	Kevin Cook
Mrs Dalwithers	Helene Guojah
Stanley Tregalleon	Mick Sane
Amelia Tregalleon	Jan Jones
James Newport	Dave Reece
Cecil Tregalleon	Chris Noble
Josephine Tregalleon	Claire McKnight
Mary White	Regina Dobbs
Millicent Clamforge	Zed Herbert
Diana Pringle	Naomi Glasser
Doctor Protheroe	John Ross
Inspector Farmer	Rob Farrow
Mr Big	Dave Reece

Act I Scene 1

Scene : In front of tabs. Stage Left a bench, behind which a signpost, showing "Tregalleon 3" on one finger and "Pentangle 12" on the other.

Marreau and Gwendolyn enter S/L carrying a torch (as old-fashioned as possible).

Lighting is very low, simulating moonlight.

Gwendolyn [*Desperation*] Oh no - look Marreau, there's still another three miles to go.

Marreau My legs I am sure they are shortening. I will 'ave to sit down for a little while. [*Sits*]

Gwendolyn Well it's your fault Marreau - [*sits*] - fancy not checking that we had enough petrol to get us here.

Marreau I am sorry Gwendolyn - I 'ad not realised how far it was along these lanes.

Gwendolyn Even Simpson would have made sure he had a full tank ...

Marreau It is indeed a pity that Simpson could not join us until tomorrow - what was his reason again ?

Gwendolyn Oh I don't know - something to do with voles I think. There's usually something small and furry behind Simon's escapades.

Marreau Indeed, this is true. Both Simpson and myself, we share the fondness of the dumb little animals.

Gwendolyn And I'm quite fond of both of you too. -

Marreau So, this place we are looking for - it is in Tregalleon itself ?

Gwendolyn Well we're meeting the Tregalleons of Tregalleon Manor, so I think it's a fair bet that it's not too far from Tregalleon.

Marreau I suppose so - You still can't think why you should have been invited to the reading of the will there, Gwendolyn ?

Gwendolyn No. I've been racking my brain trying to think what possible relation of mine could live there - but I can't think of any Cornish connection in my family at all - certainly not any called Tregalleon.

Marreau And the letter - it did not illuminate ?

Gwendolyn No, it just said that my relative, Sir Crispin Tregalleon had requested that I should attend the reading of his will - You know as much as I do about it now, Marreau What time is it ?

Marreau [*Looks at pocket watch*] Great Heavens ... it is nearly midnight ...

Gwendolyn We were supposed to arrive hours ago - they'll think we're not coming ...

[*There is a noise behind the curtains S/L near them*]

Marreau [*Urgently*] What was that ? [*both rising*]

Gwendolyn I don't know - but I don't want to wait around to find out ...

Marreau Perhaps it is a local who will be able to help us find the Manor ...

Gwendolyn And perhaps it's something rabid with sharp teeth and a short temper. [*short pause*] You go first, Marreau.

Marreau Very well ... [*peers*] 'Ello ! Is there anybody there ?
[*Silence*] Whatever it was seems to 'ave gone.

Gwendolyn Either that or it's lurking ready to pounce out at us ... [*another rustle*] There ! Listen ...

Marreau [*nervously*] 'Ello - who is there ? Expose yourself to the great Marreau !
[*A local appears, it is Seth Digory, he is carrying a lantern or hurricane lamp*]

Digory What are you wantin' about these parts at this time o' night then ?

Marreau I am the Great Marreau and this is my secretary Mrs Smith - could you tell us, are we going the right way for Tregalleon ?

Digory Well that depends on whether you're goin' that way or that way [*pointing*]

Marreau That way [*points*]

Digory Well that's what that there sign says, don't it ?

Gwendolyn It's the Manor we're looking for - Tregalleon Manor

Digory [*suddenly fearful*] The Manor ? What you be wantin' with the Manor ?

Gwendolyn We have been invited ...

Digory You don't want to be goin' up to the Manor - not not at night least ways.

Marreau Oh ? And why is that ?

Digory Bad place the Manor - strange, frightenin', eerie place it is. You don't want to be goin' there you don't.

Gwendolyn [*sarcastic*] Oh good. Why am I not surprised.

Marreau I am sure it is just the local superstition, is it not ?

Digory You calls it what you like, but you wouldn't catch me in them grounds after sun down, not for all the fish in Port Isaac - [*Slight pause*] - and I'm their gardener !

Gwendolyn Wonderful. Right then, where would you suggest that we stay for the night in that case ?
Is there an inn nearby ?

Digory Now there's a good question. [*Thinks*] Nearest inn, hmmm, well that'd be *The Witch's Broom* in Pentangle.

Gwendolyn Sounds homely ... wait a moment, Pentangle ? That's 12 miles away - surely there's somewhere nearer than that ?

Digory No, that be the nearest inn - there are pubs - plenty of 'em, but they don't have no beds.
Anyways they'll all be shut by this time o' night they will.

Marreau Well my dear, it seems we have no choice but to go to the Manor, does it not ?

Gwendolyn [*sighs*] I suppose not - [*To Seth*] So how far is it ?

Digory The Manor ? Oh you're nearly there - just go up that drive there, leads straight to it that does.
You'll be there in ten minutes [*slight pause*] provided you're not waylaid o' course. Don't say
as you've not been warned though ... [*Exits S/L to auditorium*]

Gwendolyn Nothing for it then Marreau ...

[Blackout]

[Strike bench & signpost]

[During blackout **FX : Wolves baying**]

Act I Scene 2

Scene : In front of tabs to start with. Behind the curtain the set is a manorial hall.

Lighting as before. At start Marreau & Gwendolyn are offstage in auditorium S/R.

Marreau [*auditorium, S/R offstage*] Surely it cannot be far now !

Gwendolyn [*Coming front of tabs*] There - look - there's the door Marreau ...

Marreau [*Front of tabs*] It is very dark - it does not look like anyone is 'ome.

Gwendolyn Just use the knocker Marreau, the sooner we're inside the happier I'll be.

FX: Loud heavy door-knocker

Marreau [*Central*] I hope that there is somebody here - I would not like to walk back down that path ... did you hear those strange noises, Gwendolyn ?

Gwendolyn I was trying my best to ignore them -

Marreau Most peculiar, I did not realise that there were still wolves in Britain.

Gwendolyn There aren't supposed to be ...

Curtain opens about 6 foot (2 metres) Mrs Dalwithers in the "doorway". A faint light.

Dalwithers [*Severely*] Yes ?

Marreau 'Ello - we are expected.

Dalwithers Are you - and who might you be ?

Gwendolyn Gwendolyn Smith - I've been invited to witness the reading of the will tomorrow.

Dalwithers I see - and who's he ?

Marreau I am the Great Marreau

Dalwithers Great marrow ? What are you some kind of conjurer ...

Marreau You might say that indeed - for I conjure the truth from out of darkness - I am Marreau the Great French detective.

Dalwithers French is it - that explains it - well I suppose you'd better come in then.

Gwendolyn Thank-you, Mrs ...

Dalwithers Dalwithers [*ushering them in as the curtains open fully*] ...

Curtains open fully to reveal the Manorial Hall.

Lighting is dim, simulating lamplight.

There is, as always, a sofa and two armchairs.

There are various ornaments and a carriage clock and on the wall S/L, a barometer.

Marreau Madame Dalwithers it is a pleasure to meet you.

Dalwithers [*To Gwendolyn*] Easily pleased isn't it ? There'll be no-one up to greet you this time of night. I'll show you to your rooms though.

Gwendolyn Tell me Mrs Dalwithers, are there wolves in the Manor's grounds ?
[Stanley Tregalleon enters rear S/R]

Dalwithers *[Fearful]* Wolves ? Wolves ? You've not heard the wolves have you. Oh the good Lord be with us - not the wolves !

Stanley Now, now Mrs Dalwithers no need to get excited - it'll just be the beagles -
[To Marreau & Gwendolyn] the Polwithy Hunt is adjacent to our land - it would be the beagles baying that you heard. Please let me introduce myself; I am Stanley Tregalleon, and due to the sad death of my uncle I am your host. You, I presume, are Gwendolyn Bayne - Sorry Smith, Gwendolyn Smith - I forgot for a moment that you had been married - I am delighted to make the acquaintance of my long lost cousin. *[He takes her hand and kisses it]*

Gwendolyn *[flattered]* Oh, I'm very pleased to meet you too - though I had no idea that I had Tregalleons as cousins

Stanley And you sir, you must be the famous Monsieur Marreau - the greatest detective mind of our age - or so I am told.

Marreau Your information is entirely correct.

Dalwithers *[Sotto voce]* Huh !

Stanley I thought that there was to be a third member of your party - a Mr. Simpson - is he not able to attend after all ?

Gwendolyn Yes he *will* be joining us, he's been delayed in London, he should arrive tomorrow.

Stanley Ah, good. I would like to say that I consider myself honoured that you decided to attend the reading of the will. I do hope that you will enjoy your stay with us here in Cornwall. The scenery is beautiful you know - the cliffs in particular are magnificent - but do pay them respect, there are some very sheer drops and the footing is not always reliable. I would hate for any of my guests to meet with an unfortunate accident.

Dalwithers And there *have* been some nasty accidents - *very* nasty accidents.

Gwendolyn Thank-you for the advice Mr. Tregalleon ...

Stanley Stanley, please - call me Stanley, otherwise I shall have to insist on calling you Mrs. Smith - and such formality would be ridiculously Victorian. I am Stanley, and I hope I may call you Gwendolyn.

Gwendolyn Of course.

Marreau Yes, yes, by all means call me Hemlock

Dalwithers Well sir if you're looking after these people I take it my presence is no longer required.

Stanley Indeed Mrs. Dalwithers you may go - thank-you for attending to our new guests ...

Dalwithers Very good sir. *[Exits rear S/L]*

Stanley I must apologize for Mrs. Dalwithers' rather frosty air. She has been with the family for centuries - or so it seems, she's a bit cantankerous I know, but she's a first class housekeeper.

Marreau Please do not concern yourself Monsieur Tregalleon, we have met far less welcoming people than her in our travels.

Stanley Indeed I would very much like to hear about some of the cases that you have worked on - it must be a most fascinating career ...

Marreau It will be my pleasure to illuminate you on the subject.
[Mrs Dalwithers appears rear S/L]

Dalwithers Breakfast's at Eight, prompt - if you're late it'll all be gone I should think. Just thought I'd let you know.

All: *[Muttered acknowledgements] [Mrs Dalwithers exits rear S/L]*

Gwendolyn *[To Stanley]* I'd be most intrigued to know in what way I am related to you - I had no idea that I had any Cornish relations.

Stanley Ah, indeed; Well Uncle Crispin was quite an expert genealogist - he'd studied the family history in very great detail - so if he decided that you were related, then you must be ! I know it has come as a bit of a surprise to a considerable number of our guests here. But of course, now that he is dead we are unable to question him about it - and all of his research seems to have gone missing.

Marreau This is curious is it not ? The disappearance of his work ?

Stanley *[Lightly]* I suppose it is - but Uncle was quite an eccentric old cove, bless him - he may have hidden it anywhere - I dare say it will fall on top of Mrs. Dalwithers one day when she opens some cupboard or other.
[Mrs.Dalwithers appears rear S/R]

Dalwithers I'll bid you good night then - you will remember to turn down the lamps won't you sir.

Stanley Of course Mrs Dalwithers.

Dalwithers We don't want a repetition of the unfortunate incident do we, sir.

Stanley *[slightly vexed]* No, no - of course not - thank-you Mrs Dalwithers, that will be all

Dalwithers Very good sir, good night *[Exits rear S/R]*

Gwendolyn Unfortunate incident ?

Stanley Oh nothing - a week or so ago we had a small fire in the billiard room - nothing too serious, but it seems someone left a lamp burning and somehow it got knocked over in the middle of the night.

Marreau Knocked over in the middle of the night ? By whom ?
[Mrs.Dalwithers appears rear S/R]

Dalwithers We'd heard the wolves that night too !

Stanley [Annoyed] Yes - Thank-you Mrs. Dalwithers, that *will* be all ! Good night !

Dalwithers Good night - [*unpleasantly*] do sleep well all of you [*Exits rear S/R*]

Stanley Oh I meant to ask - I didn't hear your car when you arrived - where have you parked it ?

Gwendolyn Huh - About four miles away where we ran out of petrol !

Stanley [*Disbelief*] What ! You mean you have walked here ?

Marreau Indeed, and a foot wearying journey it has been too -

Stanley [*Incredulous*] You walked *all* the way ?

Gwendolyn Well it was only a few miles ...

Stanley [*Still amazed*] But - [*slight pause*] - it's not the distance - it's the I mean - didn't you meet anything - er, I mean body - didn't you meet anybody ... who could have helped you ?

Marreau We met your gardener - but I cannot say that he was a lot of help

Stanley Gardener ! You met Seth Digory ?

Marreau If that is 'is name

Stanley And he let you walk - I mean - didn't he say anything ?

Gwendolyn Oh yes - frightened us half out of our wits, telling us that *he* wouldn't venture into the grounds at night

Stanley [*wipes his forehead*] well, [*slight pause*] you're safe here now. [*regaining composure*] I'll send Digory to retrieve your car for you in the morning if that's alright.

Marreau That would be most kind.
[*Amelia Tregalleon and James Newport enter S/R*]

Amelia [*To James*] I told you I heard voices ...

James Mind if we join you ?

Stanley Not at all, Mr. Newport - may I introduce you all - This is my sister Amelia, and Mr. Newport ..

James James ...

Stanley ... James is one of our newly discovered relatives ... as is Mrs Smith ...

Gwendolyn Gwendolyn ... [*Shaking hands with James then Amelia*]

Stanley And this gentleman is the famous French detective, Monsieur Marreau ...

Marreau Hemlock Marreau, and actually I am Belgian, but do not worry Mr. Tregalleon, it is the mistake often made ... [*Shakes hands*]

James I say - [*Momentary pause*] "Marreau" - I've heard that name before - you really are quite famous aren't you ?

Marreau Indeed my fame seems to grow from year to year.

Gwendolyn [*Half aside*] Along with his head unfortunately.

Amelia I trust my brother has been making you feel at home - though I should imagine that you just want to get to bed now after your journey.

Marreau Indeed I am feeling quite tired, especially after the walk.

Amelia Walk ?

Stanley Yes, [*To Amelia*] they *walked* the last four miles ...

Amelia *Not through the grounds !*

Gwendolyn Er - yes - we ...

Amelia *At night !?*

Marreau It was not so bad - we could see quite well - there was a full moon.

Amelia [*Almost speechless*] A full m... [*she collapses into a chair*][*James goes to her*]

Marreau What a remarkable reaction !

James Yes, Tregalleon, what's going on ?

Stanley Oh dear - I suppose I had better explain. I really didn't want to bother you with all this - but I suppose I was fooling myself if I thought I could keep it quiet.

Marreau Indeed Monsieur, it is best that any secrets are revealed otherwise my nose of the greyhound will sniff out any strange odours - and - er - well - it might leap to the conclusions that - um - something is - 'ow you say - smelling of the fish.

Stanley Well, quite. Yes.

Gwendolyn Is it anything to do with those wolves that we heard ?

Amelia [*Even more shocked*] You heard the *wolves* ?

Marreau Indeed, but Monsieur Tregalleon informed us that it was just the local seagulls.

Gwendolyn Beagles, Marreau.

Marreau Just so.

Stanley I'm afraid I was fibbing slightly there - the Polwithy Hunt is about five miles from here. The truth is we don't know what the noises are - but the locals are convinced that they are what they call [*pause*] *moon-gnashers*.

Gwendolyn You've got me there - I've never heard of moon-gnashers.

Marreau Sounds like a set of the false teeth

Gwendolyn I doubt that even the most advanced set of false teeth can howl like a wolf ...

Stanley Indeed, I'm afraid a moon-gnasher is what *we* would call a werewolf.

James Great Heavens !

Gwendolyn [*Heavy sarcasm*] Oh jolly good - nothing I like more than being marooned in a dark old house surrounded by ravening supernatural beasts. Just my sort of holiday.

Marreau But this is preposterous. There are no such things as werewolves.

Stanley I absolutely agree Monsieur Marreau - there must be some other purely logical explanation - but we have all heard the cries and there have been sightings too. In fact even I have seen red eyes peering out from the undergrowth. It makes my flesh creep just to recollect it.

Amelia Oh Stanley don't

Stanley And of course worst of all - Amelia was chased ...

Marreau *Sacre Bleu !* You were chased by the werewolf ?

Amelia Two of them !

James I say ! That's pretty rum.

Gwendolyn So what did they look like ?

Amelia I didn't look back, I just heard them running after me - I ran as fast as I could to the house - but they were catching me ! Oh it was terrifying ... I swear I could feel their breath on my legs as I reached the door. I flung it open, ran inside and slammed it shut. I went straight to the window - but there was no sign of them - they had just disappeared. Whatever they were I don't know - but they certainly weren't friendly ...

Marreau *Mon Dieu !* This is some tale.

Stanley There are other stories too - the gardener Digory - who you've met ... he says he's seen huge wolf-like animals in the woods after sunset. And of course - the full moon - that's when they're supposed to be at their most active - and tonight is such a night.

Gwendolyn So I presume we can count ourselves fairly lucky to still be in one piece then.

Stanley Indeed - extremely fortunate I would say.

Marreau How long have these events been occurring ?

Stanley Oh - that's a rather curious thing - they started the night after Uncle died - that's two months ago now.

Gwendolyn But had they ever been heard before ?

Stanley Not in living memory, no - but the legend of the moon-gnashers goes back centuries.

Marreau [*Lightly*] Perhaps we should consult Madame Dalwithers on the subject then !

Stanley [*Taking him seriously*] No ! No - I wouldn't do that ! She'll fill your mind with all sorts of superstitious rubbish ...

Gwendolyn I think that Hemlock was joking

Stanley Ah right - yes - I see.

James Well this is a fine how's-your-father Tregalleon. Chap gets invited out of the blue to some old manor house in the middle of nowhere by a family he's never heard of, but is apparently related to - and now discovers there's a better than evens chance he'll get eaten by the local wildlife. [*Slight pause*] Bit rum old man.

Amelia We are sorry, truly we are, aren't we Stanley. It's terrible really terrible !

[*Cecil Tregalleon enters S/L, he is chewing gum and is very relaxed*]

Cecil Ah phooey Amelia ! There's nothing to worry about here. Safe as houses this old place.

Amelia You haven't been chased by slavering wolves have you Cecil !

Stanley May I introduce my cousin Cecil.
Gwendolyn Another long-lost relation ?
Cecil Me ? Lost ? Well only in a moral sense ...
Stanley Indeed, we always knew about Cecil - he's actually called Tregalleon, which helps !
Cecil I've never found being called Tregalleon much of a help, actually Stanley - usually sends the locals into a flat spin, superstitious fools.
Marreau So you do not hold with the werewolf theory then Mr. Tregalleon ?
Cecil Call me Cecil for Heaven's sake - and no I don't. Load of rubbish.
Amelia It's easy for you to say that - you've not been chased by the hell hounds.
Cecil You just panicked - I bet it was some local dog trotting up the path to greet you.
James Well it all sounds a bit fishy to me.
Cecil Oh yes it's fishy alright - no doubt about that - but supernatural - never in this world.
Gwendolyn By definition really.
Cecil What ? Oh, yes - I see.

[There is a peal of maniacal laughter offstage S/L]

Marreau *Sacre Bleu !* What was that ?
Stanley Ah - that - er - that was Grace Lake
Marreau And who may I ask is Grace Lake - and what does she find so hilarious I wonder ?
Stanley Um, she's a - she's - a servant - she has strange dreams

[A woman dashes into the room S/L, she is wild and unkempt (Josephine Tregalleon)]

Josephine A wind is blowing from the east and snow shall fall ere long !
Stanley *[Heavily sarcastic]* Oh great - here she is ...
Josephine *[Swirling about the room]* The swallows have all gone and summer's but a memory.
Marreau 'ow poetic !
Josephine Beware ! Beware my friends - the things that drift upon the breeze are nought but gossamer.
Stanley Alright Grace, come with me ...
Josephine Grace ? Grace ? What name is this you call me by ?
Stanley Your name ...
Josephine *[She clings to Stanley]* Ah, my errant knight, so softly clad - well met upon this hour ...
Stanley Yes - come on - I'll take you to your bed
Josephine As once you did to yours my lord
Stanley *[Steering her offstage]* Ignore her everybody - she's a bit strange at times

[Mary White enters S/L somewhat breathless]

Mary I'm so sorry sir, she slipped past me ...

Stanley *[Concerned]* She's not hurt you again has she ?

Mary No - not this time

Stanley If you'd be so good as to get her settled again, Mary

Josephine *[Backing away from Mary]* Keep her away ! She fetters me and I am caged, poor bird that cannot fly ...

Mary Now come on Josephine ... *[she starts to lead Josephine offstage]*

Stanley *[Over to Josephine] [Firmly]* Go with her - I command you ...

Josephine And your commands I must obey my lord ... *[To Mary]* Very well my captor lead me to my fate ...

Mary Don't be so melodramatic, Josephine - I'm only taking you to your room - I've got some nice medicine for you there - it will make you feel much better.

Josephine The owl it hoots at midnight but who can hear it ?

Cecil Well anyone who was within earshot I'd say - what !

Amelia Cecil - Don't !

Josephine But he speaks true - but for the wolves - the wolves blot out the kindly owl ...

Mary Don't mention the wolves - don't !

Stanley Mary - please remove her at once

Mary Yes sir ... *[She steers Josephine strongly towards the S/L exit]*

Josephine Forget me not ! Mark what I say ... *[Mary & Josephine exit S/L]*

Stanley Um, sorry about that ...

Marreau I must say you have the servants most peculiar ...

Stanley Er, yes, you know how it is - small community and all that - have to take what's available.

Gwendolyn It's fortunate you have a servant like Mary to look after her ...

Stanley Indeed it is - not sure what we'd do without Mary.

Marreau But surely you do not employ Mary simply to look after Grace.

Stanley *[Nervous laugh]* No - no - of course not

Gwendolyn Why did Mary call her Josephine ?

Stanley Er - Oh - did she ? - I think it's to humour her - she gets it into her head that she's the Empress Josephine at times - you know, Napoleon's wife

James Great Scott, Tregalleon, you keep a strange house here I must say.

Stanley Dear me, what an impression we must give - look here, it's nearly one o'clock now - how about we all retire to bed - things will seem far more - er - normal in the light of morning.

[Mary re-enters S/L]

Mary She's settled now sir, I've given her her medicine.

Stanley Well done Mary - I may look in in a while - see that she's settled ...

Mary Very good sir ...

Gwendolyn Has she hurt you often, Mary ?

Mary What ?

Gwendolyn Mr Tregalleon asked you if she'd hurt you again ...

Mary Oh - no - and she doesn't mean to - she just strikes out sometimes ... I'd better get back to her - make sure she's alright ...

Stanley Thank-you Mary - I know it's hardly your job but would you be good enough to show our new guests to their rooms please.

Mary Of course I will sir.

James Think I'll turn in too - been a dashed long day - and that Lake woman - well she's put the tin hat on it I can tell you.

[Mary shows Marreau & Gwendolyn out, James follows] Once they have gone ...

Cecil Bit of a close call there old boy.

Amelia Yes, Stanley - what were you thinking of - they're bound to find out

Stanley Why should they ?

Amelia Well what about Mary ? She called her Josephine after you told them that her name was Grace - why Grace for pity's sake ?

Stanley First name that popped into my head - some book I've been reading I think ...

Cecil Well you'd better be more careful in future Stanley - I suggest you have a word with Mary and that old crone Dalwithers - get their side of the story straight.

Amelia Anyway - why do you keep up this pretence - it's not your fault that your wife is as mad as a hatter - most people would have had her committed by now ...

Stanley I know, I know - but I loved her once

[Another peal of maniacal laughter]

Cecil And now, old boy - do you love her now ?

[Blackout]

Act I Scene 3

Scene : The Manorial Hall as in previous scene.

No-one on stage.

[FX: A knock at the door]

Mrs Dalwithers appears S/L and sweeps across to S/R and offstage.

Simpson is offstage S/R

Dalwithers [offstage] Come on in then -

Simpson [offstage] Thank-you [coming on stage, he is wearing a long coat, preferably quite damp]
Devil of a journey down here. The weather's been appalling.

Dalwithers [onstage] Well what d'you expect Cornwall to be like in November ?

Simpson I thought it was nice and sunny down these parts.

Dalwithers Well you're very ill-informed then aren't you.

Simpson Er, yes, apparently so ...

Dalwithers Now then - what did you say your name was ?

Simpson Simpson - Simon Simpson - I'm with Marreau and Gwendolyn - they got here alright ?

Dalwithers Yes they arrived last night - at a ridiculous hour I might add - when all good Christian souls should have been abed.

Simpson Oh dear - did they get you up ?

Dalwithers No I wasn't Anyway - you wait here and I'll go and find Mr. Tregalleon.

Simpson Righty-ho

Dalwithers And don't touch anything. [exits S/R]

The following section should not be rushed.

Simpson wanders slowly round the room peering at things. He goes to touch the odd ornament then remembers the injunction not to. He looks at the carriage clock and checks his watch. He looks at a few more ornaments - finally coming to the barometer.

He looks at the face of the barometer - then taps the glass. The barometer promptly crashes to the floor [achieved by removing pin from behind flat].

A little gasp from Simpson - he picks up the barometer and tries to reattach it to the wall but the fitting is now missing. He pokes around trying to get the barometer to stay up but without success ...

Dalwithers [offstage] He's in here ...

Simpson attempts to hide the barometer - he considers tucking it behind a cushion on the sofa - but it sticks out. As Mrs Dalwithers enters with Marreau & Gwendolyn, he stuffs it up inside his coat.

[Dalwithers, Marreau & Gwendolyn enter S/R]

Marreau [Friendly greeting] Simpson !

Gwendolyn You got here at last then Simon.

Simpson Yes, terrible journey as I was telling this old [Mrs Dalwithers glowers at him] ... er ... Mrs. - um -

Dalwithers Dalwithers

Simpson Dalwithers here - dreadful weather.

Marreau Well you're here now and that's the main thing.

Dalwithers [Coldly] Would you like me to take your coat, Mr. Simpson.

Simpson Coat ?

Gwendolyn The damp thing over the top of your clothes, Simon

Simpson Ah - Er - No, I think I'll keep it on for now, thank-you Mrs Withering ...

Gwendolyn But it must be sopping wet Simon ...

Simpson Um, no, only a bit damp ...

Dalwithers You intend to wear your coat about the house then do you Mr. Simpson ...

Simpson Ah, well -

Marreau Do not be ridiculous, Simpson

Simpson [resigned] Oh right - yes - I suppose ... *he slips off his coat awkwardly, lowering the barometer to the ground on his left (downstage) side - then leaning on the barometer he holds out the coat ... an awkward pause as Mrs Dalwithers doesn't move. He realises he must take the coat to her, so he takes the few steps to her holding the barometer parallel to (and thus hidden by) his left leg, this however makes him walk stiffly and with a pronounced limp. Finally he hands the coat the Mrs Dalwithers who takes it from him ...*

Dalwithers Thank-you, [slight pause] sir ... [she turns to leave, pauses then turns back] I'll get Digory to replace the barometer shall I ? [Exits S/R]

Simpson Ah. Yes, right ...

Marreau Barometer ?

Simpson [Reveals barometer] It fell off the wall.

Gwendolyn You are a twit Simon

Gwendolyn takes the barometer from Simpson and props it against the wall underneath where it had hung.

Simpson I know.

[Stanley enters S/L]

Stanley Ah, Mr. Simpson - I'm so glad that you've arrived safely.

Marreau Ah yes, Simpson - did you see any wolves on your way here ?

Simpson Wolves ?

Marreau Yes

Simpson Here ?

Marreau Indeed

Simpson No.

Marreau Pity.

Simpson What ?

Gwendolyn Don't worry, I'll explain later, Simon.

Stanley They're not often seen in daylight, Marreau.

Simpson I say - you mean there are real live wolves about round here ?

Stanley Well

Marreau Apparently we are in the presence of werewolves, Simpson - complete nonsense of course.

Simpson Gosh ! Werewolves, now that *is* exciting - I remember trying to track down a werewolf in the Carpathians - wandered around on the scent for weeks - no luck though, but the locals were all terrified ...

Stanley A similar condition applies here I'm afraid - no-one will come near our house after sunset, it makes us feel rather isolated as you can imagine.

Gwendolyn So what d'you reckon these werewolves do during the day then ? Curl up and have a nice sleep ?

Stanley I have no idea, I hadn't thought of that ...

Marreau Your sister says she was chased by these beasts - was this not during daylight ?

Stanley Oh, er - you'd better ask her that - but I think that it was the evening - dusk really.

Marreau I see.

[Millicent Clamforge and Diana Pringle enter S/R]

Stanley Ah - Millicent, Diana - here are the new guests I told you about - Gwendolyn, Monsieur Marreau, Mr. Simpson may I introduce two more of our recently discovered relations : Millicent Clamforge and Diana Pringle

[General greetings & handshakes]

Diana I wonder what the will has in store for us - the reading is today isn't it ?

Stanley Indeed, Diana, we just have to wait for Mr. Big to arrive.

Marreau *Monsieur Big !* There is some criminal mastermind that you are expecting ?

Stanley [*Laughs*] No, no, no - not at all; poor old Henry - I dread to think what he'd say to being accused of being a criminal - no, Henry Big is our family solicitor - he should be turning up soon with the will ...

Millicent Well I hope there's something pretty good in it for me -

Marreau That is rather a mercenary attitude is it not ?

Millicent I don't care if it is ! I've come halfway across the damned country to find myself marooned at this God-forsaken hole - I'm just saying it better all be worth it.

Diana Oh, Millicent, you shouldn't be so ungrateful - you didn't have to come did you ? And Stanley and Amelia have been the perfect hosts.

Millicent I admit that the Tregalleons have received us most courteously - but I am less than impressed with all these horrible noises at night - and the lack of ... well - the lack of everything really !

Stanley I'm sorry Miss Clamforge - I realise that we are rather limited when it comes to modern amenities.

Millicent Limited ! You haven't even got electricity or gas for Heaven's sake - let alone a telephone - this is the 1930's man - it's more like the 1830's here

Stanley Ah well, the telephone has yet to arrive in this neck of the woods - but we did used to have electricity - Uncle Crispin installed a generator. The trouble is it broke down shortly after he died and no-one else knows how to fix it.

Gwendolyn Would you like me to have a look at it ?

Stanley You, Mrs. Smith ?

Simpson Oh, Gwendy's a whiz with machinery ...

Gwendolyn Simon - now that we are no longer engaged I absolutely forbid you to call me Gwendy -

Simpson Oh, o.k.

Gwendolyn But - on the other hand, thank-you for your vote of confidence in my abilities with machinery - I'm glad someone's noticed.

Stanley Well then, yes - by all means - I'll get Digory to show you where it is if you like.

[Cecil enters S/L - chewing gum as always]

Cecil Hello folks ! No fatal wolf attacks in the night I trust.

Stanley No - thank-you Cecil - and I wish you wouldn't be so cavalier about the whole thing - people are genuinely upset by it all you know.

Diana It's certainly frightening me - there's no way you'd catch me outside the house at night.

Gwendolyn I must say the howls we heard last night - they were not like any dog that I've ever heard.

Marreau And Monsieur Tregalleon he pretended that they were just the local eagles ...

Gwendolyn Beagles -

Marreau Indeed - a deception I have not forgotten.

Cecil If *you* want to take all this rubbish seriously that's up to you. But if you ask me it's just a couple of big dogs scampering about the grounds. Everyone just wants it to be something spooky, so they dig up some old fairy tale about werewolves for a bit of excitement.

Millicent Well I don't hold with all this supernatural rubbish either - but I've certainly heard the howling - damned nuisance - every time I was dropping off to sleep howl howl howl - I like to get a good night's sleep you know - not much chance of that here.

Stanley I am most sorry, Millicent - but it is out of my control.

Millicent Well I suggest you get it back under your control then, pretty smartish.

Diana And how do you propose that poor Stanley should do that ?

Millicent Poison gas !

Stanley What ?

Millicent Poison gas canisters - Chlorine - or even better, Phosgene - let them off in the woods - that'll kill off any wolves you've got lurking out there ...

Diana Millicent - that's a dreadful idea - all the other wildlife would be killed at the same time - all the badgers and squirrels, foxes, stoats ...

Simpson Rabbits

Diana Shrews [*Sensing a kindred spirit*]

Simpson Voles [*moving closer to Diana*]

Diana Hedgehogs [*staring into Simpson's eyes*]

Simpson Little mice ... [*almost in a clinch*]

Diana Oh yes - the poor little mice ...

Gwendolyn Ok. Ok. We get the message -

Millicent Sentimental idiots.

Stanley Well yes - perhaps they are - but I agree with them - we can't go killing off all the wildlife in the estate Millicent - just wouldn't be cricket.

Millicent On your own head be it. If you think a few mangy animals more important than a good night's sleep then leave 'em there - but I'd gas 'em - and if that failed I'd set fire to the woods and burn the blighters.

Simpson Great Scott !

Millicent No room for sentiment when it causes inconvenience. I've got a flame-thrower if you need one Stanley - I can have it sent over from Norfolk.

Marreau Mon Dieu ! Why do you possess a flame-thrower ?

Millicent Oh we had some escaped mink around my place - soon shifted the little devils with Old Flamey !

Diana You're horrid, Millicent ...

Simpson I say - I seem to remember reading something about that in the Times - didn't you get into a spot of trouble over that ?

Millicent A bit - stupid laws - just because I accidentally burnt down a couple of workers cottages ! No-one was killed for pity's sake - just got a bit singed that's all. Nothing to worry about. Did them a favour burning down their stinking hovels.

Stanley Yes, well, all the same, I hope you'll understand if I don't rush to employ the same tactics here - we are on bad enough relations with the locals already without incinerating their homes into the bargain.

Millicent You've had my advice - take it or leave it. [*Turns and exits S/R*]

Cecil Well she's quite a character I must say.

Marreau Indeed - a most unpleasant one.

Cecil Oh, I don't know - lot of sense in what she says actually.

Stanley Cecil you can't be serious.

Cecil I rarely am.

Diana I didn't realise what an unpleasant woman she was.

Stanley She's certainly not out to win any popularity contests, I must say.

Gwendolyn Anyway - if these are supernatural beasts, then I'm sure they'd not be affected by either gas or fire ...

Cecil But I tell you - they're *not* supernatural Gwendolyn

Gwendolyn In which case - why attack the poor things - if as you believe they're just stray dogs ...

Cecil That's rather a good point my dear. Still; might be fun to have a go with her flame-thrower ...

Diana Cecil !

Cecil Only joking.

Marreau Anyway it would seem that no-one has actually come to any harm from these creatures

[Mrs Dalwithers enters S/L]

Stanley True - Amelia's experience is the most frightening to date, but as you say, no actual harm has come to anyone

Dalwithers That's where your wrong !

All: What ?

Dalwithers I just came to tell you - They've found Seth Digory in the grounds - dead as a doornail !

----- (together) -----

Stanley What !

Diana Oh !

Simpson Gosh !

Gwendolyn Dead ?

Marreau Sacre Bleu !

Diana [*whimpers*]

Cecil Ah - that changes things a bit

Marreau I must see the body ...

Gwendolyn I'll come with you Marreau [*Marreau & Gwendolyn exit*]

Stanley Yes - I'd better come to - Oh this is dreadful ...

Dalwithers I told you strange things were afoot ...

Stanley Not now, Mrs Dalwithers will you look after Diana please [*Exits*]

Simpson Don't worry I'll do that ...

Diana Oh, thank-you Simon

Simpson Come with me ... [*Exits with Diana & Mrs Dalwithers*]

Cecil is left alone in the room - he watches them leave. He is frowning, then he smiles. He walks over to the barometer and picks it up. He removes the chewing gum from his mouth and sticks it to the back of the barometer. He then (apparently) re-affixes the barometer to the wall - (in fact the pin has been replaced).

He stands back from the barometer - after a moment ...

Cecil [*Lightly*] There we go.

[Blackout]

Act I Scene 4

Scene : The Manorial Hall as in previous scene.

Marreau & Gwendolyn on stage

Marreau *Nom d'un nom d'un nom !* Murder seems to follow me wherever I go.

Gwendolyn I must say we do seem to have an unfortunate knack of stumbling across them.

Marreau A most singular case.

Gwendolyn I wonder how he was murdered - there were no obvious signs.

Marreau Perhaps, after all, it was just the causes *naturelle*.

Gwendolyn I suppose it's possible - but the look on his face ...

Marreau Indeed - the *object* terror ...

Gwendolyn Is it possible for someone to be frightened to death I wonder ?

Marreau I do not know - we will have to wait until the doctor has performed his investigations.

Gwendolyn Simpson did well to get a doctor here so quickly - he seems to be having less luck locating the local constabulary though ...

Marreau It is certainly a nuisance that there is no telephone for miles.

[*Stanley enters*]

Stanley Dreadful business - poor old Digory

Marreau Do we know yet what was the cause of death ?

Stanley I think the doctor has nearly finished his preliminary analysis - so quite soon I hope.

Gwendolyn At least there were no teeth marks on him - so that seems to exonerate the wolves !

Stanley Well yes - but did you see his face ? I've never seen such contortions ! Dreadful !

Marreau Indeed, quite horrible.

Stanley Even Mrs. Dalwithers said "poor man" - and that's the kindest words I've ever heard her speak !

[*Simpson bounds into the room*]

Simpson What ho !

Marreau Ah Simpson - you have brought the police ?

Simpson No - I've left word at the Police Station though - so he should be with us shortly. Bit of a coincidence old Protheroe turning up again isn't it !

Gwendolyn What ! You mean the doctor you have found is Dr. Protheroe ?

Simpson Yes didn't you know - he was visiting his sister or some such - spotted him walking down the High Street in Pentangle - he said he'd be delighted to help.

Marreau Sometimes I find the coincidences in my life almost unbelievable.

Gwendolyn Yes, I suppose the policeman will turn out to be old Farmer again.

Stanley Oh ! You know our local inspector do you ?

Marreau Surely not ... You are not telling me ... Not Farmer - here ...

Stanley Well, that's his name ...

Marreau *Sacre Bleu !*

Simpson Gosh - good old Farmer - it'll be nice to see him again.

Gwendolyn At least he seems to be a bit more like a real policeman these days ...

Stanley Oh yes - quite a star Farmer's become since he moved here a few months ago - solved countless cases almost single handed. He's the talk of the neighbourhood ...

Gwendolyn Ah well in that case we must be talking about a different policeman.

Marreau Indeed, the Farmer that we know hardly fits that William at all.

[Doctor Protheroe enters S/R]

Protheroe Ah hello Marreau - fancy us bumping into each other again.

Marreau Indeed we were just saying that is the coincidence *incroyable*.

Protheroe Strange business this ...

Marreau Ah, you have discovered the cause of death ?

Protheroe Well, yes - and no.

Gwendolyn Oh ?

Stanley Surely either you have or you haven't ?

Protheroe Um, well he died of a massive heart attack - but what *caused* the heart attack I wouldn't like to say - I mean he seemed in pretty good shape - apart from being dead of course.

Marreau Anything particularly unusual, doctor ?

Protheroe You mean other than the look of complete and utter horror on his face I suppose ?

Marreau Indeed

Protheroe Yes - there was one thing - he was clutching this in his right hand

[Gives Marreau a clove of Garlic]

Marreau *[Sniffs it]* Mon Dieu ! *C'est Ail !*

Protheroe Just so - Garlic ... why on earth would he be clutching a clove of garlic I wonder ?

Stanley I think we can guess

Gwendolyn Didn't do him much good did it.

Marreau Indeed - it would seem it afforded him the protection negligée - and the reason, I would venture - is that the mischief about this place is no more supernatural than I am. I smell the work of a cunning fiend my fiends - er - fiend my friends -

Simpson Oh that's a shame - I was looking forward to tracking down a real live werewolf at long last.

Gwendolyn You really are quite strange aren't you Simon.

Simpson I suppose so.

Gwendolyn Any idea how long he's been dead, Doctor ?

Protheroe Oh yes - He died in the early hours of the morning - some time between midnight and two I'd say ... 3 a.m. at the very latest.

Marreau Great heavens ! We must have been the last people to see him alive, Gwendolyn

Protheroe Really ?

Gwendolyn Yes - it was just before midnight when we met him outside the gates ...

Stanley Of course - you'd said you'd seen him -

Marreau And he seemed pretty nervous then didn't he, Gwendolyn ?

Gwendolyn Yes - most strange - I wonder why he went into the grounds - when he'd just told us that he wouldn't ...

Marreau Indeed it is a carborundum is it not ...

Protheroe Anyway - I'd better be off - I've got some samples I need to test - just check that he wasn't poisoned ... [*Going upstage right*] but I'm pretty sure he wasn't. [*Exits S/R*]

Marreau Thank-you Doctor.

Gwendolyn So - it seems he was frightened to death !

Stanley Terrible ! In our own grounds - just terrible. And after Uncle dying in such a bizarre fashion too !

Marreau What ?

Gwendolyn Didn't your uncle die of natural causes then ?

Stanley Great Heavens no - about as unnatural as can be imagined I'd say -

Marreau Sacre Bleu - why was this not mentioned before - how did he die ?

Stanley Well - he was - er - hurled to his death I suppose !

Simpson Hurlled ?

Marreau You mean from the rocks around this coast ?

Stanley No - no - far stranger than that ...

Marreau Out with it, Monsieur -

Stanley I need to explain a few things first Uncle was a bit eccentric

[*Amelia enters*]

Amelia Ah, you're telling them about Uncle at last are you Stanley

Stanley Yes Amelia - I thought they'd better know -

Amelia Absolutely - I don't think keeping anything from Monsieur Marreau would be a good idea
[*she moves close to Marreau*]

Marreau Indeed my greyhound nose will sniff out the merest hint of falsehood or discrepancy ...

Amelia If you need anything from me, Monsieur Marreau - you only have to ask [*Strokes his arm*]

Marreau Oh - *bon* - I will definitely remember that ...

Amelia Don't let me interrupt you Stanley - do carry on ...

Stanley Yes - right - where was I ?

Simpson You were just saying how your Uncle was rather eccentric ...

Stanley Ah yes - quite - well he had lots of hobbies - apart from the genealogy, he was quite an inventor ... he messed about with all sorts of new-fangled gadgets. But his real passion was for ancient weapons of war.

Marreau *Vraiment* ! This is most intriguing !

Stanley He's recreated all sorts of old cannons and siege engines and things - anyway his latest project - and of course his last as it happened - was the tremendous trebuchet that you may have noticed in the garden.

Simpson Gosh - is that the massive catapult thing ?

Stanley That's the one.

Marreau I 'ave not seen it -

Stanley Ah no - of course you and Gwendolyn arrived at night didn't you.

Gwendolyn Yes - all we've seen of the grounds is where Digory was found ...

Stanley Ah no, you wouldn't have been able to see the trebuchet from there

Marreau So, what has this to do with how your uncle was killed ?

Stanley I was coming to that - he 'd built this damn great thing and was determined to test it -

Amelia He was so proud of it wasn't he Stanley

Stanley Absolutely - his pride and joy - anyway, we were all assembled to witness the first test firing - he hit the release lever ... and nothing happened.

Marreau Nothing at all ?

Stanley Not a sausage.

Simpson So what happened next ?

Stanley He clambered about on the thing - trying to see what was wrong with it - then it happened

Amelia Oh it was quite horrible

Stanley Indeed it was - look you see this spoon [*He picks up a spoon from the table*] - imagine that this spoon is the arm of the trebuchet ... [*He demonstrates all the following*] - The bowl of the spoon you see is held down under tremendous pressure. Now imagine - um what can I use - ah yes - imagine this peanut is Uncle ...

Simpson Was he that shape ?

Stanley What ?

Simpson Was he sort-of peanut shaped ?

Stanley Of course he wasn't !

Gwendolyn Simpson -

Simpson Yes ?

Gwendolyn Shut up will you ?

Simpson Oh right - yes - sorry.

Stanley As I was saying - imagine that Uncle is represented by this peanut ... well he climbed into the bowl of the spoon - I mean of the trebuchet - [*Stanley holds the spoon in flicking position*] he was peering over the edge when suddenly ...

Amelia Oh ! It's just too dreadful to recollect

Stanley Yes, all that pent-up energy, suddenly, for no apparent reason - it went off ! [*Stanley releases the pressure on the bowl so that the peanut flies across the stage from S/R to S/L - as it hits the S/L wall the barometer crashes to the ground*]

Amelia Ugh !

Stanley It made a right mess of him I can tell you.

Simpson [*Running to exit*] Sorry ! Feeling a bit [*Runs offstage S/R*]

Gwendolyn I'm afraid Simpson does not have a very strong stomach for anything gory ...

Marreau *Sacre Bleu !* What an incredible way to die !

Gwendolyn So, no doubt that it was an accident then

[Inspector Farmer enters S/L]

Stanley No doubt at all -

Farmer Well, I wouldn't quite say that there was no doubt at all - By 'eck I wouldn't.

Marreau Inspector Farmer ! So nice to see you again !

Farmer I'm afraid you've got the better of me there sir, indeed I am Inspector Farmer - but I can't recollect ever having met you afore sir.

Marreau Do not be ridiculous, Farmer ...

Farmer Excusing me sir, but I'd be thanking you not to be calling an officer of the law ridiculous ...

Marreau No, no, no -

Gwendolyn But Farmer - you must remember the cases we've solved together ...

Marreau Indeed - the 'amster for example

Farmer Amster ?

Marreau And only last year - when my wife was killed at MacTallach castle

Farmer Well now - I think I'd remember that, sir - anyways MacTallach castle - that sounds a bit Scottish to me that does ...

Marreau Indeed it's near Oban as I'm sure you'll remember ...

Farmer Well that settles it - I's never been to Scotland in my life - never been out of Devon and Cornwall in fact - oh except I did once go to Taunton - that's Somerset you know - quite a journey that was.

Marreau Well this is incroyable - all I can say is you must have a double, Inspector

Gwendolyn And a double with the same name and profession to boot ...

Farmer Oh wait a minute - Now I knows what's causin' all the confusion - it's my brother William isn't it - you must know my twin brother - he's a policeman too - that's what it'll be ...

Gwendolyn Good Lord - And I always thought there couldn't possibly be another Farmer !

Farmer Well I'm glad we've got that all cleared up - could've caused some confusion that could, by 'eck it could and no mistakin'. Like peas in a pod they used to say we was, but I don't see that much of 'im these days

Gwendolyn That seems a pity.

Farmer Aye it is a bit I suppose

[*Simpson re-enters*]

Simpson Ah, Farmer - how are you ?

Farmer Very well thank-you sir.

Simpson Sir ?

Marreau He's not Farmer, Simpson

Simpson Not Farmer Simpson ?

Gwendolyn Oh good grief

Farmer I am Farmer - but not the one *you* knows.

Simpson But -

Gwendolyn Believe him, Simon ... he's our Farmer's twin brother - if you see what I mean.

Simpson Well great galloping gorillas - that's amazing - you're just like him -

Farmer Goes with being identical I suppose ...

Marreau Anyway - now that we have that little mystery all cleared up - perhaps you'd explain why you were saying that there was some doubt over Sir Crispin's death.

Farmer Oh yes - right ... I just always thought the treebucket might've been sabotaged I did ...

Amelia Sabotage ? !

Stanley You never mentioned this Farmer

Farmer I couldn't find any proof - not definite as would stand up in a court of law -

Stanley So it's just supposition on your part is it ?

Farmer I suppose you could say that, yes. But I inspected that there treebucket in some detail. Sir Crispin was such a clever man - it were beautifully built it were. The craftsmanship was wonderful, the attention to detail. I can't believe that he would make the sort of error that would result in him being flicked like what 'e was.

Amelia But who would do such a thing ?

Farmer That I don't know - but what with this new death on the estate you've got to start wonderein' haven't you ? I mean I consider two unusual deaths within a few weeks and a few yards of each other a bit on the peculiar side I do. Smells a bit fishy to me it does.

Gwendolyn Very fishy indeed

Farmer I start to get suspicious I do when things like that happen - even if I wasn't before - which I was o' course.

Marreau I agree entirely inspector.

Farmer And the there's the matter of the will -

Simpson Of course - it's the reading today isn't it.

Farmer Indeed it is - and Mr Big tells me that Sir Crispin had specifically asked that I should attend the reading - and I can't help but wonder why that should be. By 'eck I do.

Stanley Well Big should be here soon - the reading is supposed to be this afternoon - but what with Digory dying I thought we might be best to postpone it.

Farmer Oh no sir, I wouldn't do that. I think there may be things in that there will which will prove very interesting, by 'eck I do.

Amelia Interesting Inspector ? In what way ?

Farmer I don't know Miss, let's wait and see shall we ?

[Mrs Dalwithers enters S/L]

Dalwithers Mr Big is here sir - shall I show him up ?

Stanley Yes, yes by all means ... *[Mrs Dalwithers exits]*

Farmer Well if you'll excuse me I want to have a word with the doctor before the reading ...

Stanley Of course inspector ...

Amelia Yes, I'd better go and prepare things too ... shall I show you where the doctor is performing his tests, Inspector ?

Farmer That'd be most helpful of you Miss Tregalleon. *[Farmer & Amelia exit S/R]*

Stanley Well, whatever he says - I can't see how anyone could've sabotaged the damn trebuchet ...

Marreau But still I would like to inspect the contraption myself

Gwendolyn Yes that would be interesting ...

Stanley Perhaps after the reading of the will ...

Marreau Certainly - there is no hurry as it is so long after the event ...

Gwendolyn I'll have a look at your generator too if you like ...

Stanley Oh yes - that - of course - that would be most helpful.

Henry Big [*Henry Big (offstage)*] Thank-you Mrs Dalwithers ...*[Enters]*

Stanley Ah, Mr Big ...

Henry Big What a day -

Stanley Certainly has been

Henry Big Run off m' feet

Stanley You've hear about Digory I suppose

Henry Big Yes, yes, dreadful, dreadful. Condolences and all that.

Gwendolyn I don't suppose Digory was mentioned in the will was he, Mr Big ?

Henry Big What ? Oh ? Crikey - hadn't thought of that - think he was actually. Just something small.
Oh dash it - that might mess things up a bit. Hope I've got all the codicils ...

Marreau The Inspector was saying that he too has been invited to the reading ...

Henry Big Quite so, quite so.

Marreau Is this not a little unusual ?

Henry Big S'pose it is - but of course the whole will is a bit bally unusual if you ask me.

Gwendolyn Oh ?

Henry Big Well even I don't know exactly what's in it !

Gwendolyn But surely you drafted it didn't you ?

Henry Big Yes, the basics of it - but there's a sealed letter in with it - with instructions that it mustn't be opened until the reading - Heaven only knows what's in there.

Stanley [*Concerned*] When did he give you this letter ?

Henry Big The day before he died would you believe - couldn't have run it much closer could he !

Marreau *Sacre Bleu !*

Stanley But this letter - can it be considered part of the will ?

Henry Big Oh yes - he had my office staff witness it before he sealed it - not that they saw what was in it of course ... all very irregular.

[Millicent Clamforge enters S/R]

Millicent Is that damned solicitor here yet, Tregalleon ?

Henry Big Yes, madam - I am the damned solicitor !

Millicent Ah right - good - just don't want to stay in this accursed place a moment longer than I have to - that's all - no offence man.

Henry Big None taken - I presume, madam, that you are Miss Clamforge.

Millicent Right in one old man !

Henry Big Your reputation goes ahead of you !

Millicent Does it by gad ! Well I hope I live up to it then !

[Mary White re-enters, concerned]

Mary *[To Stanley]* Sir, sir- it's your wife - I mean Grace ...

Stanley Dammit Mary - think what your saying - What about her ?

Mary She's gone missing - she's just disappeared !

Stanley What ! How could she ?

Marreau Your wife ?

Henry Big I say Tregalleon - this really is serious ...

Stanley Too darned right it is ...

[Blackout - Curtain]

Act II Scene 1

Scene : The same, early afternoon. To start with the lighting is still dim.

The scene opens with Diana and Simpson in a clinch in front of the sofa.

Diana Oh I'm so glad we've met Simon.

Simpson Yes - jolly good news really.

Diana We're such kindred spirits !

Simpson [*Nodding*] Mmm. [*A noise of agreement, not doubt*]

Diana You know - [*slight pause*] - I sometimes dream about furry animals ...

Simpson Gosh - do you ? Any particular sort ?

Diana Mostly little mice ...

Simpson Harvest mice ?

Diana Yes, darling-little harvest mice they're so sweet !

Simpson Mm, yes, they are quite nice ...

Diana Dormice too - they're cute, with their chubby little cheeks ...

Simpson Er - yes, I suppose so

Diana Just like you really !

[Diana pulls Simpson onto the sofa]

Simpson Oh - Gosh !

Diana Ahhhh, Simon - [*slight pause*] - [*with passion and suppressed guilt*] Talk rodents to me ...

Simpson Ah, right, yes - um rodents - let's see ...

Diana [*rapturously*] Fill my mind with furry creatures ...

Simpson Um ...

[Millicent Clamforge enters S/L]

Millicent [*Not seeing them*] Dammit all - where is everyone ? - [*sees them*] Good grief - what are you two up to ?

Simpson [*Stands up quickly*] Er ...

Millicent As if I can't guess ...

Diana Oh Simon, it's that horrible woman

Millicent That's me. I don't suppose either of you know where that solicitor chappy's got to, do you ?

Simpson He's gone back to his office to find some codicils I think.

Millicent Idiot ! Wouldn't get away with lackadaisical behaviour like that if he worked for me.

Simpson I can imagine.

Millicent Wouldn't catch my solicitor forgetting his codicils ...

Diana No, I should imagine everyone looks after their codicils in you presence, Millicent.

Millicent What ? You do talk some tripe don't you Diana ?

Diana [*Standing*] Well I'd rather talk tripe as you call it - than be a nasty, hard-hearted, animal-murdering, misanthropic battle-axe like you.

Millicent I'll take that as a compliment ...

Diana You really are insufferable aren't you ? [*Marches out S/L*]

Millicent I hope so. - So, Simpkins or whatever your name is - what do you expect to get out of this blessed will then ?

Simpson From the will ? - absolutely nothing ...

Millicent Nothing ? - What brings you to this foetid hole then ?

Simpson Just keeping Gwenders company really ...

Millicent Gwenders ?

Simpson Gwendolyn Smith - you know - with Marreau

Millicent Oh him - that puffed up frog who struts about like he's got a poker up his (breeches) ..

Simpson [*Cutting in*] I say - don't insult Marreau - he's a very good friend of mine ..

Millicent Well, each to his own ... wouldn't catch me associating with a frog though - slimy lot -

[*Mary White enters*]

Mary Oh - I heard voices - I thought it might be Stanley - I mean Mr. Tregalleon

Millicent Have you found that mad woman yet ?

Mary No - she's just disappeared.

Millicent Oh well - it's an ill wind and all that - at least we won't have to put up with her stupid bloody cackling now, will we ...

Simpson I say, Miss Clamforge - that's a bit harsh - the poor woman's obviously very disturbed.

Millicent Damned loony you mean.

Simpson Is she really Stanley's wife ?

Mary Yes - yes she is - poor Mr Tregalleon ...

Simpson Then who's Grace Lake ?

Mary Oh that was just a name he made up - he was trying to keep his wife a secret from the new visitors - he didn't want to have to explain everything, he finds it all very upsetting - I've just been telling that Belgian detective all about it.

Millicent He's French actually.
Mary No, I'm sure he said he was Belgian ...
Simpson Don't worry I always get confused about that too ...

The lights suddenly brighten somewhat

Simpson Aha ! Looks like Gwendolyn has worked her magic with the generator !
Millicent Thank heavens for someone with a bit of acuity !

[Stanley Tregalleon enters]

Stanley Ah, there you are Mary ..
Mary Yes sir ...
Stanley No sign of her ?
Mary None, sir.
Stanley Curses ...
Simpson How did she manage to escape ?
Mary I think she must've got out through the window - there was some torn material on the catch.
Millicent Wasn't she chained ?
Stanley Chained ? You're talking about my wife - not some wild animal ...
Millicent Perhaps you'll learn from your mistakes now then - make sure she's properly secured ... and I'd put her in a sound-proof room if I were you - all that shrieking's enough to send us sane 'uns doolally.
Stanley I'll thank-you to let me run my household in the way I see fit, thank-you madam.
Millicent On your own head be it. *[Goes to exit S/L]* Some people never learn. *[Exit S/L]*
Simpson I think I'd better find old Marreau - see if he needs my help. *[Moves U/S]*
Stanley Ah yes - he was looking for you actually .. he's in the library
Simpson Right then ... the library ... *[hesitates, goes S/L]*
Stanley That way, Mr Simpson *[points S/R]*
Simpson Oh fine, thanks *[Exits S/R]*

Stanley Damn it Mary - where on earth could she have got to ?
Mary I don't know - I'm so sorry ...
Stanley It's not your fault my dear ... I know she's a handful - always was !
Mary Oh Stanley - I'm not sure I can take much more of this ... *[clutching him]*
Stanley Mary, my sweet - I thought it would all be so simple ...

Mary What's happening Stanley ? First the wolves - then poor Digory - and now this - it's too much Stanley - why can't we just be together ...

Stanley Mary, Mary - we will be - everything's just going wrong at the moment ... but we will be together, I promise [*they embrace*]

[*Millicent re-enters S/L*]

Millicent ... and another thing ... [*sees them*] ... oh I see ...

Stanley [*Quickly backing off*] No ! No you don't see, you evil witch - I was just comforting her.

Millicent Evil witch is it - your famous hospitality is slipping a little, Mr Tregalleon

Stanley Damn you woman - think what the hell you like - [*going over to Millicent*] but I warn you - spread any malicious rumours about Mary and me and I'll personally see to it that you'll regret ever having crossed the Tamar.

Millicent [*Not at all abashed*] That's more like it man - bit of fighting spirit. Don't worry though - I won't say anything - why should I ? You can do what the hell you like around here - it's your Manor - what concern is it of mine. As for regretting crossing the Tamar - I did that the moment I pitched up at this ruin.

Stanley Well you'll soon be able to be on your way, won't you - once you've got your hands on whatever's coming to you - then we'll all be happy.

Millicent Absolutely.

Mary What was it you'd remembered anyway - you came in to tell us something ...

Millicent Oh just to say that as Mrs Smith managed to get the generator going in about five minutes flat, it's a pity you couldn't have shown the same level of initiative and made this place a bit more welcoming.

Stanley [*Curtly*] Indeed - and perhaps for your next visit I'll install a gas pipeline ...

Millicent That's it, man - give as good as you get. Much better [*Turns and exits S/L*]

Stanley She's unbelievable, that woman.

Mary But at least she said that she wouldn't say anything about us ...

Stanley Yes - and the strange thing is I trust her - she might be an old war-horse, but I think she plays a straight bat.

[*James Newport enters*]

James I say - did I hear you mention cricket, old boy ?

Stanley No I was talking metaphorically.

James Pity, could have just done with a game of cricket - take m' mind off all the weird goings on around here.

Mary I'd better have another look for Josephine ...

Stanley Yes - I'll join you in a few minutes ... [*Mary exits*]

James Don't let me hold you up, old bean, you get on - I'm not important.

Stanley Not at all, Mr Newport - You are my guest and therefore very important ...

James Well it's jolly sporting of you to say so - but really man - with all the things that have happened today - I think you've got more pressing things than chatting to an old duffer like me ...

Stanley If you're sure - then perhaps ...

James Oh - just one thing - am I to understand that the rather strange woman who came in warbling on about swallows and owls and things is actually your wife ?

Stanley Indeed she is ...

James Well in that case, you have my commiserations, sir. Damned bad luck and all that.

Stanley Thank-you

[*Cecil enters*]

Cecil Any news Stanley ?

Stanley No - still no sign of her ... I'm just off to help the search - [*going to exit S/L*] coming ?

Cecil No thanks if it's all the same to you - it's a bit damp outside.

Stanley Fair enough. [*Exits S/L*]

James I suppose I ought to help in the search really.

Cecil I wouldn't bother old man. She might be my cousin, but she can disappear for good for all I care.

James I say, that's a bit heartless isn't it ?

Cecil Well I've never claimed to have a heart - other than for essential blood pumping reasons of course. No - love 'em and leave 'em - that's my motto. The moment they get a bit serious dump 'em and move onto the next filly !

James Well really man - that's the attitude of a cad sir, a cad and a bounder.

Cecil Er - yep - fair description.

James You can't be proud of being a cad, surely sir.

Cecil Proud ? No - can't say I'm proud of it. Can't say I'm bothered one way or the other really. Just my way of living my life. If the world wishes to call me a cad, then let them.

James Well sir - I think it's outrageous [*Going to exit*] I'll bid you good day. [*Exits S/R*]

Cecil *[Looks over and sees that the barometer is off the wall again] Oh here we go again ...*
[Goes over to the barometer, picks it up - removes another blob of chewing gum]
[Looks at the wall] That's odd - I wonder who put that nail back in - [Touches nail ...
Shudders violently - The lights flicker] Arghhhh !

[As the lights flicker, Cecil falls to the floor -

There is a peal of maniacal laughter offstage (left)]

Blackout

Act II Scene 2

Scene : The same, a little later. The lights are back to being dim.

Marreau and Gwendolyn are investigating the barometer nail.

- Marreau** Well, Gwendolyn, I presume that you must feel at least partly responsible
- Gwendolyn** What ? Why should I ?
- Marreau** If you had not fixed the generator, then poor Cecil would not have received the voltage to 'is finger ...
- Gwendolyn** Yes, but that's hardly my fault - I didn't know that it would make the barometer nail live, did I ? It's not something one normally considers when getting a generator working.
- Marreau** No but all the same
- Gwendolyn** Anyway - when Simpson knocked the barometer off the wall the nail went missing - so I think whoever it was that replaced the nail is a bit more culpable than I am.
- Marreau** That is a good point ... I wonder who did replace it.
- Gwendolyn** I would venture that discovering that would go a long way to solving the whole mystery of this place.
- Marreau** Oh ? You are suggesting that the electrifying of the nail was not an accident ?
- Gwendolyn** Well, it's a bit of a coincidence isn't it ? We have Sir Crispin's highly unusual death - the howling wolves, Digory and now this ... as Farmer said "I'd be getting suspicious, if I wasn't already - which I was."
- Marreau** I never thought that I would hear you quoting Farmer, my dear.
- Gwendolyn** No - that it should come to this !
- Marreau** But it is surely a bit of a haphazard way to try to kill someone is it not - how did perpetrator know that it would be Cecil who'd touch the nail.
- Gwendolyn** Very true - though he had replaced it once already .. or maybe he *wasn't* the intended target.

[Simpson enters]

- Simpson** What-oh folks ! Bit of a shocker about old Cecil isn't it.
- Gwendolyn** Had you been practising that pun, Simon ?
- Simpson** Er - yes - I had as it happens.
- Marreau** We were just saying that when you knocked the barometer off the wall you could not find the nail - is this correct.
- Simpson** Yes - spot on - I must say I feel a bit guilty about the whole thing.

Gwendolyn It's not your fault Simpson - any more than it's mine ... It's down to whoever put the new nail back in.

Simpson Yes that's what I mean.

Gwendolyn What ?

Simpson It was me - I hammered the new nail in.

Marreau Oh Sacre Bleu !

Gwendolyn You, Simon -

Simpson Yes - of course you hadn't yet fixed the generator when I did it, so *I* didn't get blasted.

Marreau I think that your idea that finding the 'ammerer would help solve the other mysteries has taken a bit of an 'ammering itself, 'as it not, Gwendolyn.

Gwendolyn Yes - I suppose it has ... hold on - why didn't you re-hang the barometer on the nail once you'd hammered it in ?

Simpson Oh - that - well I heard Mrs. Dalwithers - and I scarpered I'm afraid - she gives me the willies that woman.

[*A somewhat singed, dishevelled and spiky-haired Cecil totters in*]

Cecil I, I, I think I'd better sit down

Marreau Ah Monsieur Cecil - 'ow are you feeling now ?

Cecil Erm - well - er - a bit dazed actually ...

Marreau It must have been a terrible shock !

Gwendolyn Don't you start Marreau.

Cecil Shock - yes - certainly was - that's just what it was.

Simpson You blew the generator up again - and Gwendolyn can't fix it this time.

Gwendolyn That's hardly something to blame Cecil for, is it Simon ...

Simpson Er no, I suppose not. Anyway Cecil, sorry I caused you to get zapped like that.

Cecil You - why you ?

Simpson It was my nail - I must have hit a live wire accidentally.

Cecil [*Still rather vague*] Oh right ... oh well ... can't be helped - sure you didn't mean to ...

[*Dr. Protheroe enters*]

Simpson That's jolly sporting of you Cecil.

Protheroe Ah, there you are, Cecil.

Cecil Oh, hello doctor

Gwendolyn It's a good job you were here wasn't it doctor - I don't suppose he'd have survived without your prompt action.

Cecil Really Doc - did you save me ?

Protheroe Oh it was nothing - but I really do think you ought to get a bit more rest

Cecil I must say - I am feeling a bit woozy - [*to Simpson*] don't suppose you'd help me to m' room would you ?

Simpson Yes - yes of course [*He helps Cecil up ... they stagger towards the S/R exit*] Least I can do old chap ...

Protheroe Here - I'll come with you ... check you over again ... [*Helps support Cecil*]

Cecil Make sure they get me down for the reading of the will ...

Simpson Don't worry - I'll come and get you. [*Cecil, Dr. Protheroe & Simpson exit S/R*]

Gwendolyn I must say Cecil's taking it very well - didn't seem cross with Simpson at all.

Marreau Indeed ... I think I would have been.

Gwendolyn Me too - even though it was an accident.

[Inspector Farmer enters S/L]

Farmer By 'eck - whatever's goin' to 'appen here next I wonder ...

Marreau Inspector - any news of Mrs Tregalleon ?

Farmer No, she's still missing - no sign of her. I have got a bit of news about old Digory though.

Marreau Oh ?

Farmer More like none-news really. I's just been looking at the results of the toxicolly ... toxicordy ... er ... poison tests like - and they all came out negative. Looks like he died of an 'eart attack plain and simple.

Gwendolyn So can that be considered murder I wonder ?

Farmer [*Sits S/L*] Well now, that's a very interesting question, and one that I'm not sure I'm qualified to answer.

Marreau Why is this, Inspector.

Farmer Old Digory see - he had a heart condition he did. We thought as much when we found the digitalis on him ...

Gwendolyn [*Correcting him*] Digitalis ?

Farmer Aye that's the one - digitalis - well-known heart tonic that be of course.

Marreau Indeed - of course [*it's actually news to Marreau*]

Farmer So then - if someone terrified 'im on purpose - knowing as he had a weak heart - then to my mind that's murder.

Marreau I would most certainly agree.

Farmer But if he were frightened by accident ... or even as a little joke like by someone who didn't know about his condition - well that's a completely different matter iznit - misadventure that'd be as they call it or just bad luck really.

Gwendolyn And how are we going to prove which it was I wonder, Inspector.

Farmer Just so, my dear, just so. It's like the treebucket - no proof.

Gwendolyn There is one thing Inspector that I've been meaning to mention ...

Farmer Oh, what be that then ?

Gwendolyn When I fixed the generator - there were two strange things ...

Marreau You did not mention this to me Gwendolyn - what were these things ?

Gwendolyn Yes, sorry Marreau - it slipped my mind what with Cecil's accident and everything.

Farmer Go on then Mrs Smith - what were these things you noticed then ?

Gwendolyn The first was that the generator wasn't stone cold. It's perishing out in that shed, but the metal of the generator was just cool, not freezing cold.

Farmer So you're suggestin' that it had been used fairly recently ...

Gwendolyn Yes, Inspector - that's exactly what I suspect ...

Marreau And what was the other thing ?

Gwendolyn Well it follows on from it really - the reason that it wasn't working was simply that water had contaminated the petrol ... but there's no way it would work until I'd flushed it through.

Marreau I do not see the significance of this, Gwendolyn

Farmer I do - these two observations they be contradictory they be -

Gwendolyn Quite, Inspector.

Marreau Meaning ?

Farmer Meaning sabotage my friend - meaning sabotage. And if you remember rightly I've had thoughts about sabotage around this place afore I have. By 'eck I have.

Marreau The trebuchet.

Farmer Aye - the, er, [*frowning*] tree-boo-dhzay. Now then; there's another question isn't there ...

Marreau Is there ?

Farmer Yes - if the generator's been used fairly recently, then what's it been used for ? We know it wasn't bein' used for the lights and things coz. they b'ain't been workin' and Mr. Tregalleon said as they'd not had any 'lectricity for weeks - not since 'is Uncle died 'n' all.

Gwendolyn Yes Inspector - of course.

Marreau Well I am baffled.

Farmer I think I'll go and have a look at that there generator ... see if I can get any ideas what it has been used for.

Gwendolyn Mind if I come with you ?

Farmer No, not at all, glad of an extra pair of eyes - are you coming Monsieur Marreau ?

Marreau No; I do not think I'll bother - I cannot see what possible importance the generator could be to this mystery.

Gwendolyn Do you not, Marreau ?

Marreau No - you go on your chase of the wild ducks if you wish - I will study my notes in welcome silence, which I think we shall find is a far better use of my valuable time.

Farmer Right you are, sir. [*Farmer & Gwendolyn exit S/L*]

Marreau Ah - that is better ... [*Lies on sofa*] ... A little peace and quiet

[*Another peal of maniacal laughter*]

Marreau Arrgh !, [*Sitting up*] Is it impossible to get a moment's silence in this place ?

[*Amelia enters S/R*]

Amelia Monsieur Marreau - I'm so pleased I've found you ...

Marreau Oh, Miss Tregalleon [*rises*] - Amelia ... how very pleasant ...

Amelia You don't know how reassuring it is to have such a great detective in our midst ...

Marreau Indeed - it must be a great comfort to you.

Amelia [*Coming closer*] How are your investigations going ?

Marreau This place it has many mysteries ...

Amelia Mysteries - yes - since Uncle died ... [*she looks away suddenly*]

Marreau Oui Mademoiselle, what is it ?

Amelia [*Clutching Marreau*] I'm frightened !

Marreau Oh !

Amelia Protect me, Marreau !

Marreau Er ...

Amelia The hell-hounds chased me - they know my scent ... look what they did to Digory

Marreau But Monsieur Digory - 'e died of the *assaut de coeur*

Amelia But brought on by what ... by the werewolves ... hold me Marreau ! Protect me !

Marreau But of course [*he holds her*] it is my pleasure ...

Amelia I feel so safe in your strong arms

Marreau The feeling - it is most *naturelle*

Amelia I'm so alone here ...

Marreau You have your brother and your cousin ...

Amelia But no-one strong like you !

Marreau Ah, *C'est la vie !*

[Millicent enters]

Millicent Oh good grief, they're all at it !

Amelia *[Breaks away]* O, Millicent ... what are you doing here ?

Millicent Well I *am* a guest of yours - however unwelcome I may be ...

Amelia Of course you're not unwelcome ... whatever gave you such an idea ?

Millicent Your brother calling me an "evil witch" was a bit of a clue.

Amelia He didn't ! - Surely ...

Millicent Don't worry about it, sticks 'n' stones and all that. I've been called far worse, believe me.

Marreau Indeed I do ..

Millicent Anyway - to answer your question - what I'm doing here is to tell you that James Newport has gone missing - no-one can find him anywhere.

Marreau He is a grown man - he has probably just taken himself off for a walk.

Millicent Yes, apparently that's just what he did - but said he'd be back in half an hour ... and that was three hours ago.

Marreau Well I do not think that the search parties are called for just at this moment ...

Millicent Trouble is - apparently he was seen heading for that dangerous headland ...

Amelia Not - not the Devil's Head ?

Millicent Yes - that's the one - apparently it's a bit risky by all accounts ...

Amelia That's an understatement if ever I heard one - had no-one warned him about it ?

Marreau What is so dangerous about this Devil's Head ?

Amelia Oh - there've have been some nasty accidents up there ...

[Mrs Dalwithers peeps in from S/R]

Dalwithers Very nasty accidents ...

[Peal of Maniacal laughter]

Amelia I wish they'd hurry up and capture Josephine.

Millicent She certainly seems to be leading them a merry dance.

Amelia Anyway Mrs Dalwithers ... what's the news on James ?

Dalwithers *[Coming slightly D/S]* He's met a sticky end I reckon

Amelia Oh that would be awful ... poor Mr. Newport -

Marreau But why is it so dangerous ?

Amelia It's the Devil's Bottom !

Marreau *Pardon !* I thought you said it was the Devil's Head ...

Amelia Yes the Devil's Bottom is on the Devil's Head

Marreau What strange anatomy !

Millicent [*Laughs*] Ha - very good !

Dalwithers It's no laughin' matter ... you venture there at your peril. Deadly place ! Dangerous, dark and dreadful place it is !

Amelia Indeed it is - I think Uncle Crispin is about the only person ever to survive falling into it.

Marreau Falling into it ? - Into what ?

Amelia The Devil's Bottom - it's like a chimney - straight down into a sea cave - during storms the sea can shoot out the top of it like a fountain.

Marreau How dramatic.

Dalwithers Deadly it is ! [*Gradually working up to a crescendo*] Shrouded in mists most of the time, hidden from view - ready to catch the unwary, ready to swallow up the wanderer, ready to dash to death any that cross its threshold

Amelia Yes, quite, Mrs Dalwithers, I think we get the idea.

Dalwithers Few come back from its edge - from its deadly jaws - few indeed.

Amelia Yes uncle was very lucky - he fell in but got blasted straight out again by an enormous wave.

Marreau Sacre Bleu ! Most fortunate.

Dalwithers Yes he were lucky. Izn many as can say they've survived the Devil's Bottom !

Millicent Can't see that many would want to try !

Amelia Are you sure that Mr. Newport was heading that way ?

Dalwithers Oh yes'm - saw him myself, climbing the Devil's path 'e was.

Amelia But why ? Why would he go to such a place ...

Dalwithers That I don't know ... but one thing's for sure - 'e won't be comin' back ! ... He's dead 'e is - dashed to death and dead as dodos - mark my words [*Exits S/R*]

Millicent She's a cheery soul, ain't she.

Marreau Zut Alors ! I 'ave never known a place so full of danger !

Millicent Must say I'll be pleased to get back to Norfolk - bit safer !

Amelia Provided you watch out for people wielding flame-throwers of course...

Millicent Ha ! I'm beginning to warm to you lot, y'know - got a bit of character after all !

Amelia Poor James - he hadn't an enemy in the world I shouldn't imagine.

Millicent Funnily enough I'm sure I heard him arguing with Cecil just before he got fried by that nail - don't know what all that was about.

Marreau Oh ? This is most intriguing - I shall 'ave to ask Monsieur Cecil about this.

Amelia What does it matter, Monsieur Marreau - we know that Cecil's accident was - well, just that - an accident - and there can't be anything suspicious about a man walking somewhere dangerous and falling to his death, can there ?

Marreau Of that, I wonder, mademoiselle -

Millicent I say Marreau, what are you suggesting ?

Marreau I suggest nothing - I merely observe, deduce and analyse.

[Henry Big enters]

Henry Big Thought I'd find some life in here ...

Marreau Ah, Monsieur Big

Amelia Henry - got everything ready for the reading now ?

Henry Big Yes - yes - brought the bally lot this time - think we're covered for all eventualities now.

Marreau I trust that includes the death of James Newport.

Henry Big Newport ? - By jiminy, you're not telling me he's a gonna too are you ?

Amelia Down the Devil's Bottom it would seem.

Henry Big Dear, dear - there won't be many recipients left soon.

Amelia Oh ! Don't say that ! Let's hope this is an end to it.

Millicent I think I'm going to start carrying my swordstick for good measure.

Amelia What a terrible impression you must have of our home

Millicent Yep - that sums it up pretty well.

Henry Big I don't suppose you've managed to round up Josephine yet ?

Amelia No she's still on the loose - but we've heard her cackling every now and then so she can't be far away.

Henry Big It's a bit off you know - having the deceased's daughter running wild about the place -

Marreau The deceased's *daughter* ?... surely she is the wife of his nephew - not his daughter.

Amelia Henry that was supposed to be ... I mean - oh you may as well tell them I suppose

Henry Big Oh, sorry Amelia - but it would all have come out in the will anyway ...

Marreau What would ?

Henry Big Josephine Tregalleon is the late Sir Crispin's daughter - she married her first cousin Stanley - she is the natural heir of Sir Crispin - but of course her insanity rather precludes her from inheriting.

Marreau *Sacre Bleu !* This is the information most important !

Henry Big Right then - perhaps if we can get everyone together, I can get this dashed will read at last.

Amelia Yes of course.

[Blackout]

Act III Scene 1

Scene : The same, a little later. Extra seating has been arranged. The lights are brighter again.

At scene opening people are still drifting in.

Gwendolyn & Simpson are front of stage.

Simpson I say Gwenders, well done getting the generator going again.

Gwendolyn Yes, it was a bit more complicated this time - but I managed it.

Simpson Find anything interesting there - when you were poking around with the Inspector ?

Gwendolyn Yes - as a matter of fact we did - but I'll tell you and Marreau all about it later.

Simpson Righty-ho - Gosh this is all quite exciting isn't it. I wonder what you're going to inherit, Gwendolyn.

Gwendolyn I can't possibly think ...

Diana Simon ! Have you been avoiding me ?

Simpson No ! No, not at all !

Diana We must get together again - there are so many little furry things to talk about.

Simpson Yes - yes there are aren't there !

Henry Big Everyone here now ?

Amelia No, hold on Henry - The doctor and Stanley are helping Cecil to come down.

Henry Big Right you are.

[Dr. Protheroe and Stanley enter supporting Cecil ... they ease him into a seat]

Cecil Thanks chaps.

[Simpson, Gwendolyn & Diana take their seats. Everyone is now seated or perched]

Henry Big Right - well you all know why we're here.

Cecil Yes - find out what Old Crispy's left us !

Stanley I think "Old Crispy" could be your nickname now, Cecil. *[Several people snigger]*

Cecil I say, Stanley - that was almost a joke.

Henry Big If you wouldn't mind ...

Millicent Yes - come on - let the old boy get on with it - some of us just want to get back to civilisation before the walls start bleeding or vampire bats swoop in - I wouldn't put anything past this place.

Henry Big Thank-you Miss Clamforge, though I'm not sure the hyperbole will be entirely appreciated.

As directed by Sir Crispin I shall read the main will along with any relevant codicils, namely those relating to Seth Digory, James Newport and Josephine Tregalleon.

After that I shall open this sealed envelope [*holds up envelope*] and read the contents therein.

Stanley [*Aside to Amelia*] I wish I knew what was in the damned letter.

Amelia [*Aside to Stanley*] What on earth *could* it be ?

Henry Big I'm sorry Stanley, is there something you wanted to say ...

Stanley I - um - no - I

Marreau Monsieur Stanley - If it is the fact that Josephine, your wife is also your first cousin being in fact the daughter of the late Sir Crispin - then - as you can tell - we are already aware of the fact.

Stanley Oh, right, I see. Well yes - that was it actually.

Henry Big Perhaps now then I may proceed - unless anyone else has some urgent announcement they wish to make ? [*A short pause*] No ? Alright then ...

"This being the last will and testament of Sir Crispin Tregalleon signed and sealed with the" ... blah, blah, blah ... lots of legal gubbins here that I'm sure you don't want to hear ... ah, here we go ... the bequests :

"To Mary White I leave an annuity of twenty pounds per annum in addition to her wages - to be paid while she continues personally to nurse my daughter, Josephine."

Are those conditions acceptable to you, Miss White ?

Mary Yes, most acceptable and most generous. I just hope we can find Josephine before she can do any damage to herself.

Stanley Yes - as soon as this reading is over we must redouble our efforts to find her.

Amelia Quite - We don't want her knocking over any lamps again.

Marreau Ah ! Aha ! So it was Josephine who caused the fire in the billiard room ?

Stanley Indeed it was - she nearly killed us all that night - and would have done had Mary not found her in time.

Mary It was nothing sir.

Stanley Nothing ! Of course it wasn't nothing ! You rescued Josephine from certain death then raised the alarm and saved us all. You deserve a medal in my opinion.

Cecil Well we all know that Mary is held in your highest esteem, old boy.

Stanley Watch what you're saying, Cecil ...

Amelia Yes Cecil - be quiet !

Cecil Oh sorry - touched a nerve have I ?

Henry Big [*Annoyed*] If I *may* continue !

Stanley Yes, sorry Henry - do go on ...

Henry Big Ah, now, the next bequest was to Seth Digory - "*Twenty five pounds and the right to shoot pheasants and other game on the estate for the rest of his life.*"

Well, as we all know, the rest of his life didn't extend to much - the codicil [*opens separate sheet*] simply directs that "*in any circumstances where he was unable to inherit, the £25 should go to his sister Mavis Digory.*"

So - not much of interest there ...

Now then, "*to Mrs Demelza Dalwithers*"

Cecil Demelza ! I never knew that was your name !

Dalwithers I'll thank you to forget it again immediately, sir.

Henry Big If I may continue ... "*to Mrs Demelza Dalwithers I leave the sum of One Hundred Pounds ..*"

Dalwithers Bless the master for the kind soul he was ...

Henry Big Oh that's not all Mrs D - not by a long way ... "*an annuity of twenty five pounds per annum for the rest of her natural life.*"

Dalwithers [*Delighted*] Oh !

Henry Big "*And the freehold of Eglantine Cottage in the village of Tregalleon.*"

Cecil I say - that's my cottage !

Henry Big Not any more, Mr Cecil !

Cecil Well I'll be - I hope he's come up with something good for me then ...

Henry Big We'll see sir, won't we.

Cecil I suppose so.

Dalwithers [*In wonder*] I can't believe it - my own cottage.

Henry Big I know he was very fond of you Mrs D - I believe he wanted you to have a comfortable retirement.

Dalwithers [*genuinely overcome*] Bless 'im ! Bless 'im for the kind, kind man he was ...

Farmer Well that's nice isn't it. Always nice to see someone happy in such sad circumstances.

Dalwithers [*sobs*]

Henry Big Well then - we now move on to the newly found relations, of which he was so proud to have discovered ...

Simpson That's you, Gwenders ...

Henry Big Indeed - "*To Miss Gwendolyn Bayne*" - oh there is a codicil [*looks at paper*] correcting this to Smith - "*To Mrs Gwendolyn Smith - I leave my collection of moths.*"

Gwendolyn *Moths ?*

Henry Big "... *and butterflies ...*"

Gwendolyn Oh great ...

Simpson I say - that'll be fascinating Gwenders ...

Gwendolyn I feel like I really shouldn't be ungrateful - but - um - why on earth did he think that I'd like his moths for Heaven's sake ?

Marreau [*Suppressing laughter*] It is indeed a most unusual bequest.

Farmer You never know when a moth collection might come in handy, by 'eck you don't.

Gwendolyn *Handy ?* Ho hum - moths it is.

Millicent I can't say I like the way this is going - what am I going to get - his spiders ?

Henry Big We shall see, Miss Clamforge, we shall see. Now then, the next legatee was James Newport - unfortunately he is of course missing presumed dead - but he *was* to receive Sir Crispin's collection of golfing memorabilia. If it turns out that he is indeed dead then according to this codicil, the collection reverts to the main estate.

Stanley Pity - could have done with getting rid of that. At least the bloody moths are going.

Henry Big "*To Miss Diana Pringle*"

Diana Oh ! That's me,

Henry Big "*To Miss Diana Pringle, in appreciation of her love of nature, I leave the woods extending to twelve acres on the east side of the estate known as Squirrel Wood - see attached map -*" oh yes, here's the map. "*On condition that they are kept as wild woods and never developed.*"

You'll have to sign a covenant to this effect, Miss Pringle if that's alright.

Diana Oh that's wonderful - what a thoughtful man he must have been.

Dalwithers What a lovely man he was ...

Diana Simon - my own wood - my very own wood - imagine all the little creatures that we can look after there ...

Simpson We ?

Diana Yes, Simon - You and I - we can make our own little sanctuary ...

Simpson Oh right - us - we - um - sanctuary - yes - lovely.

Gwendolyn I reckon I got off lightly with the moths ...

Henry Big *"Miss Clamforge"*

Millicent About time too - What's the old devil left me then ?

Dalwithers *[Incandescent]* Don't you *dare* call him a devil !

Millicent Calm down, calm down - just a figure of speech !

Dalwithers Well you just watch what you're saying.

Henry Big If I may ...

Millicent Yes, get on with it man ...

Henry Big *"To Miss Millicent Clamforge I leave my late wife's mink coat."*

Millicent Ha ! Ha, ha, ha ! The old rascal - oh what a joke - drags me across the blessed country to give me a load of dead mink ! Ha ! I wish I'd met the old fellow - I reckon he was a right character ! Well then ! What the hell ! I'll take the coat and be proud of it ! At least he gave me a good laugh - carry on ... let's hear what every one else has got.

Henry Big That concludes the new relations - So now we move on to the main family members.

Marreau And this I feel will be most intriguing !

Henry Big *"It pains me to remember that my nephew Cecil Tregalleon was left a considerable sum by my late brother, Cedric - money which has been squandered by him, and in just five years has disappeared ..."*

Cecil Squandered ! What ! It's been invested -

Henry Big I'm sorry Mr. Cecil - I can only read what it says in the will ...

Cecil But this is outrageous - Stanley, tell him ...

Henry Big Please let me complete the reading ...

Cecil Very well - but I tell you I've not squandered it ...

Henry Big *"In addition to this, for the last three years he has lived rent free in Eglantine Cottage without so much as a thank-you for my generosity"*

Cecil What ?

Henry Big *"Therefore, my intention is that the aforementioned Cecil Tregalleon shall not receive one penny piece from my estate."*

Cecil Well, thank-you Uncle ! Stanley - I need to have a word with you about this !

Stanley Yes, Cecil - I'll talk to you afterwards - don't worry, we'll sort something out.

Cecil Oh, right - *[still rather doubtful]* - just make sure we do.

Henry Big *"To my niece, Miss Amelia Tregalleon, I leave the sum of One Thousand pounds, an annuity of One hundred pounds per annum and the freehold of Penzeal Farm."*

Amelia Oh ! That's not bad - Penzeal's a bit of a dump, but I'm sure I can do something with it.

Henry Big Indeed Miss Tregalleon, a very generous settlement I would say. Now then, we come to the main bequest, I'll read Sir Crispin's instructions in full -

"Due to the unfortunate mental state of my daughter Josephine, I will include her inheritance with that of her husband, my nephew Stanley Tregalleon.

To them I leave the residue of my estate including the Manor of Tregalleon and all lands attaching thereto other than those previously disposed of by this document - provided that Stanley Tregalleon continues to care for my daughter within the family home."

Stanley Ah - I thought he might say that.

Henry Big There is more, Mr. Stanley ...

Stanley [*Rather glumly*] Oh is there ...

Henry Big *"I realise that the marriage is now effectively null and void. Therefore I will that Stanley Tregalleon may still receive these benefits even in the event of his divorcing my daughter and any subsequent remarriage, provided that my daughter Josephine remains cared for at Tregalleon Manor by a qualified nurse."*

Mary [*Delighted*] Oh Stanley ! Did you hear that ? !

Stanley Yes - yes, I did - jolly decent of the old boy - jolly fair ... I wish I'd known this before actually - not the impression he'd ever given I must say.

Henry Big Taking into account the property, investments and capital this will makes you a decidedly wealthy man, Mr Tregalleon.

[*A peal of maniacal laughter*]

Henry Big Er - couple - for technically of course, everything is jointly owned with Josephine.

Stanley Of course, of course.

Marreau Congratulations Monsieur

Cecil Yes, yes, well done old boy - you will see me alright though won't you Stanley.

Stanley As I said, Cecil, we'll discuss it later ...

Cecil You'd better not try to fob me off - You know how much I've helped you in the past.

Stanley Of course I do - be quiet Cecil - you'll be taken care of, don't you worry.

Henry Big Ahem ! If I may draw your attention to this ... [*flourishes letter*]

Stanley Oh - the damned letter - yes - I suppose you'd better read that ...

Henry Big There's no "supposed" about it - it forms part of the will.

Farmer Now then - I think things may hot up a little !

Gwendolyn Oh ? Do you know what's in it then ?

Farmer No - no I don't - but judgin' by the fact that there was hardly anything to warrant me being here in the rest of the will, I'm thinkin' that there might be something a bit juicy in that there letter if you follow my meaning.

Simpson Crikey ! I wonder what it could be !

Henry Big Well if you'd all settle down we'll find out. To be honest, I'm as intrigued as you as to what's in the darned letter - and why he saw fit to keep it so bally secret.

Dalwithers Oh I 'ope my little cottage izn going to go ...

Henry Big [*Opens letter with letter knife, looks at contents*] [*After a moment*] Well ! Well I never ...

Stanley [*Very concerned*] What is it man ? Read it out !

Henry Big "*Firstly, I have discovered that I have been misled over Cecil Tregalleon's profligacy and have therefore unfairly excluded him from my will ...*"

Dalwithers It's my little cottage izn'it ! I knew it !

Henry Big If you'll let me finish Mrs D "*...(from my will), I therefore bequeath the sum of five thousand pounds to Cecil Tregalleon, on the condition that not one penny is invested in any business venture of my son-in-law and nephew Stanley Tregalleon*"

Cecil I say ! Five thousand ! Jolly good show !

Stanley Happy now Cecil ?

Cecil Well I'm only getting back what I've invested with you already.

Marreau Aha ! So that is what 'appened to your father's money.

Cecil Absolutely - Old Stanley was always tapping me up for a bit more here and a bit more there till it had all run out.

Amelia Is this true, Stanley ?

Stanley Well - they all seemed good bets at the time ...

Marreau And how are these investments performing, Monsieur ... the money it is multiplying ?

Stanley Well, no, actually - had a bit of bad luck really - listened to some rather poor advice - you know the way it is. That's investment for you - never know for sure and all that ...

Cecil So how much of my money *is* left Stanley ?

Stanley Oh - er - I'd have to look in the accounts ...

Marreau Approximately will do, monsieur ...

Stanley Oh, right - approximately - um - well, approximately - er - nothing.

Cecil What ? You've lost it all ?

Stanley You're alright, Cecil - you've got the five thousand now - you're fine ...

Cecil [Very affably] Yes - I suppose you're right - oh well, can't complain - look on the bright side and all that.

Stanley That's the way old chap ...

Farmer I think I might like to have a look at the details of those investments, Mr. Tregalleon - I don't like the sound of this at all ...

Stanley It's all above board I assure you ...

Henry Big Excuse me ! I have not finished reading this letter ...

Stanley What ? There's more ?

Henry Big Oh yes, most certainly there's more ...

"Secondly: If this letter is being read then it is safe to assume that I am now dead - if my death can undeniably be ascribed to natural causes then this letter finishes at this point."

[small sob from Mrs Dalwithers]

Well I don't think being splattered against a stone wall having been fired from an enormous catapult can really be considered natural causes, so I'd better continue hadn't I.

Farmer Indeed you better had sir - I think we're coming to the crunch I do.

Cecil Rather like poor old Uncle did, what !

Amelia Oh ! Don't joke about it Cecil - it was horrible ...

Henry Big Indeed, so to continue :

"In the last few weeks before the date of this letter there have been a number of strange incidents - things which individually could be considered accidents, but each of which could have had serious repercussions - possibly leading to my death.

On two occasions electrical wires have become unaccountably exposed and caused me to receive a severe shock.. A shotgun cartridge somehow found its way into the paraffin stove and then I discovered that the can marked as containing paraffin actually held petrol. There have been numerous other incidents where cupboards have collapsed and tools have snapped inexplicably. Yesterday, my lathe span out of control and virtually flew to pieces. I therefore believe that someone is intent on seriously harming - and possibly killing me.

If you are reading this, then they have evidently succeeded. It is of course too late to save me, but perhaps by drawing these events to your attention justice will prevail."

Marreau *Sacre Bleu !* It is a great pity that he did not contact the Great Marreau sooner - I may have been able to prevent his murder !

Stanley Why on earth didn't he mention his worries to me - to anyone for that matter ?

Farmer Why indeed sir, why indeed ?

[Blackout]

Act III Scene 2 / Act III Scenes 2&3*

*** This Act may be split - see notes in text**

Scene : The same, a little later.

Only Marreau, Gwendolyn, Simpson and Farmer are on stage

Farmer I's often said that it would be handy if the dead could talk - I never expected it to happen though.

Gwendolyn Absolutely - a message from beyond the grave really.

Marreau Just so !

Farmer I always thought that Sir Crispin's death was fishy, I did.

Marreau This is a most intriguing case.

Simpson Of course, we don't know for sure that it *was murder*.

Gwendolyn That's true - just because Sir Crispin believed he was in danger doesn't mean that the trebuchet incident wasn't an accident.

Farmer Indeed it don't miss - and what is more it doesn't provide us with a shred more proof. It's proof we need, not just suppositions and theories.

Gwendolyn Oh hold on - Marreau and Simpson don't know about our discovery, do they Inspector.

Farmer By 'eck you're right, they don't

Marreau Discovery - what discovery ?

Gwendolyn Oh while we were chasing the wild ducks, as you put it, Marreau - we found the werewolves, that's all.

Simpson Great Scott ! Really Gwenders ! You found a real live werewolf ?

Marreau What ! Do not be ridiculous ... what are you talking about Gwendolyn ?

Gwendolyn Alright I'll explain - The first thing we found were wires leading from the generator to Sir Crispin's workroom - we followed these wires and found that Sir Crispin was evidently very interested in the latest gadgets.

Simpson Gosh what kind of gadgets ?

Farmer By 'eck - what *wasn't* there ! There were things bristling with valves and coils of wire and *things* - my brother William would have loved all that ...

Marreau Indeed we have had cause to make use of your brother's technical knowledge before now.

Farmer Oh right, glad 'e was of help ...

Gwendolyn Anyway - the most interesting device there was a *Marconi-Stille* wire band machine.

Simpson A what ?

Gwendolyn The sort of thing used to record the sound for movie films ...

Marreau And why was this so interesting ?

Gwendolyn Don't you see ?

Marreau [*Shakes head, nonplussed*] *Non.*

Gwendolyn Well this machine was linked to the biggest amplifier I have ever seen in my life.

Farmer And that there amplifying-thingy, it had loads of wires comin' out of it ... all goin' out through a little hole in the back of the shed ...

Simpson Still can't see what this has to do with the werewolves, Gwenders ... do you Marreau ?

Marreau Er - um - *Non* ...

Gwendolyn Oh good grief ! The wires went off into the woods ... to loudspeakers ...

Simpson Gosh ! So - er - they were playing films to attract the werewolves ?

Gwendolyn [*Exasperated*] *No- !!!* Oh you two can be obtuse at times ! The recording device was playing the werewolf sounds ... It's all artifice. There are no wolves ... neither natural nor supernatural ... [*Deliberately*] It's all an elaborate hoax.

Simpson Crikey ! That's amazing ... pity though.

Gwendolyn Pity ?

Simpson No werewolf for me to track down.

Marreau So as I have said all along - the werewolves they are imaginary.

Gwendolyn But the question is, who cooked up this idea ..

Farmer And perhaps even more interesting - why ?

Marreau If you will excuse my less than boundless enthusiasm for your so-called discovery - I think that when compared to the fatal splattering of Sir Crispin, it is of little import !

Gwendolyn But don't you think that the two things could be connected Marreau ?

Marreau (H)ow ? In what way could the silly prank with the wolfy noises be linked to the ballistic behaviour of Sir Crispin ?

Farmer Well that's just it - isn't it.

Marreau Anyway, it is surely obvious is it not ? Both the *who* and the *why* of the werewolf sounds.

Gwendolyn Is it ?

Marreau The only people who could have arranged such a thing would be one or more of the Tregalleons - Stanley, Amelia and Cecil ... They are the only ones with sufficient access to both the house and grounds. Also, it has been obvious from the start that Amelia was lying when she spoke of being chased by the werewolves ...

Gwendolyn Oh ? Why do you say that, Marreau ?

Marreau "I was chased by two of them" she said if you remember ...

Gwendolyn Yes - so ...

Marreau But she also said that she had not seen them - only that she "felt their breath on her legs" - [*accusatively*] how then did she know then that there were two of them ?

Farmer By 'eck Monsieur Marreau, that's good thinking that is ...

Gwendolyn Absolutely Marreau - that had escaped my notice I must say.

Marreau Also, Miss Tregalleon has been trying - unsuccessfully I might add - to wheedle the information from the Great Marreau.

Simpson Gosh how was she doing that ?

Marreau By using her feminine wiles - but Marreau he is beyond such tactics. He smells the mouse ! Trying to find what deductions I have made and continuously mentioning the stupid wolves.

Simpson I say !

Gwendolyn Well, Marreau - I'm in awe ... so it looks like Amelia is certainly responsible - but what about Stanley and Cecil ?

Marreau Stanley also says that he has seen the red eyes in the undergrowth, when we know that this is obviously the make-believe.

Farmer By 'eck Monsieur Marreau - you've been thinking this through good 'n' proper haven't you.

Marreau But of course. Now then - as for Monsieur Cecil, he 'as consistently refuted the suggestion of the werewolves - suggesting instead that they are simply the straying dogs - this to me is evidence either of his innocence or of a clever deviousness.

Gwendolyn Cecil doesn't seem very clever to me.

Simpson Really ? I thought he came over as quite an intelligent sort of chap.

Marreau [*Lightly*] Only compared to you my friend. No, I agree with Gwendolyn, I think that the mystery of the wailing wolves is solved and Amelia and Stanley are the perpetrators.

Farmer I think I'd have to be agreeing with your deductions there sir - but then there is still the question of why they've been doin' it isn't there.

Marreau Well surely this is obvious too -

Gwendolyn Is it ?

Marreau To scare the locals away from the grounds - particularly at night. What other reason could there be ?

Simpson Gosh - what a plan !

Marreau A simple plan - bring alive the ancient legend and the locals will stay away for sure.

Gwendolyn Excellent Marreau - but that leads to another "why" doesn't it. Why do they want to keep the locals away from their land ?

Marreau And that my dear Gwendolyn is precisely what I have been trying to discover - had you found this out for me then I would have been more impressed with your chasing of the ducks around the generator !

Farmer I've got a suggestion to make ...

Marreau Indeed Inspector ?

Farmer Hows about we ask them.

Marreau [*Laughs*] And you think that they will simply admit everything and tell us ?

Farmer Perhaps they will if we play a little trick on them. If I could borrow Mr Simpson here, I think we could give them Tregalleons a bit of a surprise - one that might loosen there tongues a bit as well as confirming your theory, sir.

Simpson Jumping Jodhpurs ! This sounds a cracking wheeze !

Marreau I do wish you would speak in the English language, Simpson. But yes, Inspector - by all means borrow Simpson ... is there anything you need us to do ?

Farmer Just get the Tregalleons in here with you - I'm sure you'll work out the rest when the fun starts !

Marreau Very well. However I hope that you will remember that this wolf charade is simply a side issue - for we must still attempt to solve the mystery of Sir Crispin's fatal projection !

Farmer Oh yes - I knows that - I reckon it might help with that too ! Come on Mr. Simpson - we've got work to do ! [*Going towards exit S/L with Simpson*]

Simpson Gosh ! This is more like it [*Farmer & Simpson exit S/L*]

Gwendolyn Well, Marreau - I'm impressed.

Marreau Ah, it is nothing - the wolves, they are not important.

Gwendolyn Surely - if Sir Crispin was murdered then everything points to Stanley. He is to inherit the bulk of the estate and therefore has the most to gain. He was in financial difficulties having lost all Cecil's money and probably all his own to boot. He has a mad wife and from what I gather he is having an affair with her nurse. And to cap it all it seems he has something to hide in the garden ...

Marreau And do not forget that he probably sabotaged the generator as you detected ... why do you think he did that ?

Gwendolyn That's simple - he'd said that it wasn't working - so he had to make it not work.

Marreau Of course - but why make up the story of the faulty generator in the first place ?

Gwendolyn Because he needed the power to run all that electrical equipment - for the wolf sounds.

Marreau Ah - but surely he could have run the lights as well ?

Gwendolyn I thought about that - I think that the equipment took so much power that the lights would have dimmed - and people would have asked questions.

Marreau Hmmm - intriguing - so we can add sabotage to his list of accomplishments - I must say that the case against Monsieur Stanley is getting stronger.

Gwendolyn Stronger perhaps, Marreau - but still without a shred of proof. How can we get the proof ?

[*Millicent enters*]

Millicent Proof ? What's this about proof ?

Marreau Ah, Miss Clamforge - nothing for you to worry about.

Millicent Nothing to worry about ay ? The word "proof" means one of two things to me - And I don't think you're talking about the strength of alcohol are you ?

Marreau Indeed, no.

Millicent Well perhaps I can help -

Marreau I think that is highly unlikely.

Millicent Do you by Gad - well I assume that this all has something to do with poor old Sir Crispin - am I right ? Yes - knew I was ! Well, I never met the old boy - but I wish I had. Seems to me like he had a good sense of humour - nothing I like more in a man than a good sense of humour.

Gwendolyn You've never found a man to share your life with then, Miss Clamforge ?

Millicent Scare 'em off I'm afraid. Too dashed direct, that's my problem. Can't help it. Have to live with the consequences. Can't change. Can't be helped. There we go.

Marreau So, anyway, Miss Clamforge, there is nothing you can help us with I'm afraid ...

Millicent Well - remember the offer's there if you want it. I'd like to see the blackguard who killed him strung up as much as anyone. I'd do it myself if they gave me the rope.

Gwendolyn [*ironic*] Right - jolly good.

Marreau Actually there is one service you could perform for us ...

Millicent Oh fine - fire away - what is it ?

Marreau Could you see if you can get the Tregalleons to join us here ?

Millicent The Tregalleons - yes of course - what all of them ? Even the mad one ?

Gwendolyn Ah no - not Josephine - just the three comparatively sane ones, thank you, Millicent.

Millicent Right you are. Consider it done. [*Marches out S/R*]

===== **Optional end of Act III Sc2** =====

The following section (asterisked lines below) may be completely omitted if desired -

It was performed in the original performance, but serves little purpose.

If omitting this section, there is now a [Blackout]

OPTIONAL SECTION

- *Gwendolyn Just for the sake of argument, suppose that Sir Crispin was definitely murdered - and suppose also that it wasn't Stanley - who else has a motive and the ability to carry out the murder ?
- *Marreau Let me think - To commit the sabotage and presumably the earlier incidents upon Sir Crispin the perpetrator must have had access to the trebuchet and his workshop. This rules out all the so-called new relations such as yourself.
- *Gwendolyn Right, so that's Millicent, Diana and - oh yes of course - James Newport all ruled out.
- *Marreau Indeed. The servants then - Seth Digory is dead, and what could 'ave be 'is motive ?
- *Gwendolyn Mrs Dalwithers ?
- *Marreau She was devoted to her master
- *Gwendolyn Yes - and if she was going to kill someone, she be direct - she'd not use sabotage ...
- *Marreau I agree ... what about the nurse - what is her name ?
- *Gwendolyn Mary White - Yes - perhaps - she's certainly involved with Stanley, that's for sure - but I can't see her rôle as more than that of accomplice - she had so little to gain.
- *Marreau Just so, - and so we are simply left with the Tregalleons themselves.
- *Gwendolyn Amelia - she inherits that farm and some money - but will that really change her life so much ? Is that sufficient motive for such a violent murder ?
- *Marreau Who knows - motives are strange things - remember Gwendolyn that Little Jimmy killed his grandmother to avenge his pet 'amster !
- *Gwendolyn O.k. - so Amelia is a possibility.
- *Marreau And finally Cecil.
- *Gwendolyn Yes, finally Cecil - no money because Stanley had lost it all - though of course he didn't know it at the time. Was due to inherit nothing - until the will was changed ...
- *Marreau An interesting point - how much did people know of the contents of the will I wonder ...
- *Gwendolyn Of the original will, I have no idea - but of that letter, absolutely nothing apparently.
- *Marreau So he certainly didn't know about the five thousand ... and his motive disappears.
- *Gwendolyn So we're back to Stanley aren't we. It's pretty clear who did it. But motive and opportunity alone do not make a case.
- *Marreau What is more - whoever did this - whether it is Stanley or whoever - they are clever - as clever as any criminal we have ever dealt with.

=====**End of removable section**=====

[*Stanley and Amelia enter*] (**Marreau & Gwendolyn** on stage already)

Stanley Hello Marreau - Millicent tells us that you wanted to see us.

Marreau Thank-you Mr. Tregalleon - it is simply that letter of your Uncle's - the nest of cornets has been disturbed and the wasps are buzzing in my 'ead.

Amelia Sounds nasty, Monsieur Marreau.

Stanley Well then - how can we help ?

[*Cecil enters, he has recovered from his shock*]

Cecil Yes, what is it Marreau - anything to help - just ask.

Gwendolyn I should imagine you're relieved to have received the five thousand when you thought you were getting nothing, Cecil.

Cecil Too right I'm relieved. Especially as I was losin' m' house into the bargain.

Stanley But I'd've seen you alright, Cecil - after all I feel somewhat responsible for your financial problems - I wouldn't have seen you homeless old boy.

Cecil Somewhat responsible ? Totally responsible more like.

Stanley Well it's all academic now isn't it ...

[*Suddenly FX: Sound of howling wolves - much louder than before*]

Cecil What the blazes !

Stanley What the Devil's going on ?

Marreau It is the wolves is it not ?

Cecil Must be in the bally house by the sound of it !

Amelia But they can't be !

Marreau So it would seem !

Cecil Crikey I must say - they *do* sound like wolves ...

Gwendolyn Why can't they be in the house Amelia ?

Amelia Because they - because - I mean ...

Stanley Dammit Marreau ! It's a trick isn't it !

Marreau And we are not the first to play it - are we Stanley.

Stanley Oh blast you Marreau ! Alright yes -

[Diana rushes in]

Diana Simon ! Simon ! Where's Simon !

Marreau *[Calls off toward S/L]* Alright Simpson ! You can get Farmer to switch that infernal noise off now !

Simpson *[Peeping in from S/L]* O.k. Will do !

Diana Simon ! What's going on ?

[Mrs Dalwithers enters]

Dalwithers The wolves ! The wolves are in the house ! The good lord protect us !

Marreau Do not concern yourself Mrs Dalwithers - they will soon stop their howling

[FX: Howling stops - preferably mid-howl]

Marreau There - what did I tell you.

[Millicent enters with Mary White]

Millicent What was all that racket for Heaven's sake.

Mary Stanley - what's going on ?

Gwendolyn Indeed I think Stanley is the best person to explain precisely what's going on.

Mary What does she mean ?

Stanley Alright, alright - yes - the werewolves are my invention - they're recorded - as you have obviously discovered !

Mary Stanley ! Why ?

Marreau Indeed - we uncovered your little deception - and we are well aware that Miss Amelia is your accomplice in this.

Stanley Well what if she is ? We've broken no laws - nothing to say we can't play howling wolves in our grounds if we want to.

[Farmer enters]

Marreau Quite so. But perhaps the reason behind your deception is not quite so honest !

Stanley How dare you sir ! It was simply to keep the locals away - keep them off my damned land.

Marreau And that is all is it ?

Amelia Stanley - tell him ! Tell him - it's nothing to be ashamed of ...

Stanley Oh - Dammit Amelia - it's our business ...

Amelia Just tell them ...

Stanley Very well ! We - we've discovered some gold ... that's what it is ...

Cecil Gold ! Here !

Stanley Yes, Cecil, gold - A vein of Cornish gold right here on our estate.

Simpson Great Scott ! That's lucky.

Stanley Yes well - we didn't want anyone poking about and finding it ... not until the will had been read and I was confirmed as the owner. That's where all your money's gone Cecil - into surveys and testing and things - of course I had to do it all behind Sir Crispin's back coz. he'd have been mortified if he thought we were going to turn his precious estate into a literal gold mine.

Dalwithers Well sir - I think you're really a bad 'un - that I do - deceiving Sir Crispin in that way.

Stanley Oh, think what you like ...

Cecil I say - so does that mean I'll get my money back Stanley ?

Stanley Get it back ! Get it back - A hundred fold I should hope.

Farmer And the motive for murdering Sir Crispin grows ever stronger !

Stanley What !

Amelia Murder ? Uncle Crispin - No never ! Not Stanley - he could never do anything like that.

Stanley Certainly I couldn't - the idea is appalling !

Cecil Dammit Stanley, I wish you'd let me in on the darned secret - instead of fobbing me off with ridiculous stories -

Farmer Oh by the way - your little scheme with the loudspeakers wasn't completely harmless after all was it ?

Amelia Why ? What do you mean ?

Farmer When Mr. Simpson and me went into the woods to get them speaker things - guess where we found one - just a few yards from where old Digory died ...

Amelia Oh no !

Farmer Oh yes - poor old Devil got the fright of 'is life 'e did ! Thought there was a werewolf right behind 'im. Finished 'is poor old ticker off.

Stanley Well we weren't to know - it was just an accident.

Marreau Accident or whatever - it will have to remain on your conscience for the rest of your days, monsieur !

[*There is a peal of maniacal laughter*]

Millicent Oh good grief ! Has no-one caught that mad woman yet

[*Josephine sweeps in*]

Josephine The wolves are dead ! Rejoice ! Rejoice !

Mary [*Going to her*] Come now Josephine ...

Josephine Ah Mary - Mary - my kind nurse ...

Mary What ? You know who I am ?

Josephine Of course - I know many things - I hear many things - I see many things

Stanley Josephine ! Good grief - are you recovering ?

Mary [*Concerned by this development*] She sometimes has these lucid spells

Josephine From my little eyrie I see all sorts - from my little window

Farmer By 'eck what do you see ?

Josephine I saw my father flying ! I saw him sailing through the air !

Amelia Oh no ! Poor thing - you witnessed that ?

Josephine I see my cousin too - I see him in the bushes with his knife ...

All: What ?

Cecil What are you saying ...

Josephine With his knife behind the big machine

Cecil Josephine ! No !

Josephine [*To Cecil*] Before my father flew - I saw you there

Cecil You're imagining it ... it'll never stand up in court ...

Farmer Oh I think we have a bit to go on now sir !

Cecil The word of a mad woman ! No ! You'll have to do better than that !

Marreau Indeed, I fear that still the proof eludes us ...

Cecil Yes - quite right Marreau it does !

Alright yes - I did it !

[*The barometer falls to the floor*]

I made a few accidents happen - got him all jittery - then I convinced the old man that Stanley had swindled me - I got him to write that letter - leave me some money - then I killed him before he could change his mind again.

Well he was old - he'd've gone soon enough - I needed the money *now* - so now you know. But you'll never prove it. Never ! I'll deny every word I've spoken ! There is no proof - I'm in the clear -

Dalwithers Are you ? Are you indeed [*she lunges at Cecil with a carving knife**]

Cecil Arrrgghhhh ! Dalwithers ! Dalwithers - you've killed me !

Dalwithers I surely hope so !

Marreau Mon Dieu !

Cecil Arrrgghhhh ! [*He dies*]

Farmer By 'eck !

Everyone including DrP. clusters round Mrs Dalwithers patting her on the back.

----- Coda -----

Marreau Is 'e dead doctor ?

Protheroe Who ?

Marreau Cecil.

Protheroe Oh - hang on - [*kicks Cecil's foot*] - Yes he's dead.

Farmer Well that saves us an expensive court case I suppose. I reckon Mrs Dalwithers was acting in self defence there wasn't she ?

All: [*General agreement*] [**James Newport** enters S/L in a werewolf mask]

Dalwithers Oh thank-you, everybody, thank-you ... Just one thing though ... you say as there izn any wolves really ?

Stanley No, I'm sorry Mrs. D - it was all make believe ...

Dalwithers What's that then ? [*Points quaveringly offstage towards auditorium S/L at the "werewolf"*]

Stanley What the Dickens ?

[*Diana screams*]

Farmer Zooty Laws !

Marreau By 'eck !

James Ah sorry, sorry ! It's only me.

Dalwithers Mr Newport ! The Devil's bottom's turned him into a moongnasher !!

James [*Removing mask*] Oh sorry - didn't mean to upset anyone - I just found this silly mask in the woods.

Amelia Oh, that's where I lost it - I've been looking all over the place for that.

[Blackout]

The end

*Note : The knife used should be an automatically retracting stage knife (spring loaded made of plastic).

Marreau will return in the ninth instalment "**Marreau and the Terror of Tring**"